MONDAY
April 13, 2026

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TRAFFICKING ATTEMPT

163 children rescued in M.P., eight men held

NEWS » PAGE 10

NEED FOR CARE

Delimitation is the issue, not women's reservation: Sonia

'The exercise will be an assault on the Constitution'

EDITORIAL » PAGE 8

'APPROPRIATE TIMING'

Nepal PM to visit India soon, says FM Khanal

WORLD » PAGE 14

FIRING AGAIN

Salt and Patidar help RCB get back on track

SPORT » PAGE 15

Electorate falls by 10.2% in nine States, three U.T.s

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Among the nine States and three Union Territories that undertook the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the second phase, Uttar Pradesh has recorded the highest net deletion of voters in absolute numbers at 2.04 crore, followed by West Bengal at 83.86 lakh.

In percentage terms, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands had the highest net deletion at 16.6%. Lakshadweep recorded the lowest deletion, both in absolute numbers (181) and percentage terms (0.3%).

According to data shared by Election Commission of India (EC) sources, as many as 67 lakh deceased voters and 1.28 crore duplicate voters were removed in this phase, which was announced on October 27 last year. It identified 1.34 crore non-existent voters and 3.15 crore voters who had migrated. The consolidated electoral rolls of the nine States and three Union Territories saw a reduction of 10.2%, bringing the number of active voters down to 45.81 crore from more than 50.99 crore before the revision exercise.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

Iran, U.S. blame each other as talks end without a deal

Talks collapsed after Iran's refusal to commit to abandoning its path to a nuclear weapon, says U.S. after the 21-hour-long talks in Pakistan; Iran blames 'U.S. overreach' for breakdown of dialogue

Associated Press
ISLAMABAD

The United States and Iran ended face-to-face talks in Pakistan on Sunday without an agreement, each side keeping the onus on the other without narrowing their differences and leaving a fragile two-week ceasefire in the war in West Asia in doubt.

U.S. officials said the talks collapsed over Iran's refusal to commit to abandoning the path to a nuclear weapon, while Iranian officials blamed the "U.S. overreach" for the breakdown of the talks without mentioning specific sticking points.

Neither side indicated what will happen after the truce expires on April 22. Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said his country will try to facilitate a new dialogue in the coming days.

"We need to see an affirmative commitment that they will not seek a nuclear weapon, and they will not seek the tools that would enable them to quickly achieve a nuclear weapon," U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance said after the 21-hour talks. Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, who led the Iran delegation, said it was time for the U.S. "to decide whether it can gain our trust or not".

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

Hanging in the balance

The breakdown of talks leaves doubt over the future of the two-week ceasefire in the war in West Asia

"We need to see an affirmative commitment that they [Iran] will not seek a nuclear weapon
J.D. VANCE, U.S. Vice-President

"It is time for the U.S. to decide whether it can gain our trust or not — **MOHAMMAD BAGHER GHALIBAF, Iran Speaker**

Winding up: Pakistan officials escort U.S. delegation leaving after the talks on Sunday. AFP

Trump threatens blockade of Strait of Hormuz

ISLAMABAD/WASHINGTON
U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday said the U.S. Navy would "immediately" begin a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. » PAGE 14

NEARBY

CM's political secretary 'asked' to quit

BENGALURU / SHIVAMOGGA
A day after KPCC Minority Cell chairman Abdul Jabbar tendered his resignation, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's political secretary Naseer Ahmed is learnt to have been asked to step down. » PAGE 6

Over 30 MLAs head to Delhi

BENGALURU
Amid speculations over a leadership change in the State, a set of Congress legislators left for Delhi on Sunday to mount pressure on the party high command. » PAGE 6

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGES 3, 5 & 17

Asha Bhosle, versatile singer, dies in Mumbai

Chinmay Gaikwad
MUMBAI

Legendary playback singer Asha Bhosle died in Mumbai on Sunday. She was 92.

The singer was admitted to the Breach Candy Hospital on Saturday evening with exhaustion and a chest infection. Hospital officials said the cause of death was multi-organ failure following a cardiac arrest.

Her son, Anand Bhosle, confirmed the news outside the hospital. He said those who wish to pay their last respects may visit her residence on Monday at 11 a.m. Her last rites will be performed at Shivaji Park at 4 p.m, with full state honours.

Ms. Bhosle, who recorded nearly 12,000 songs in over 20 languages throughout a career spanning decades, is widely considered one of the most versatile voices in Indian music.

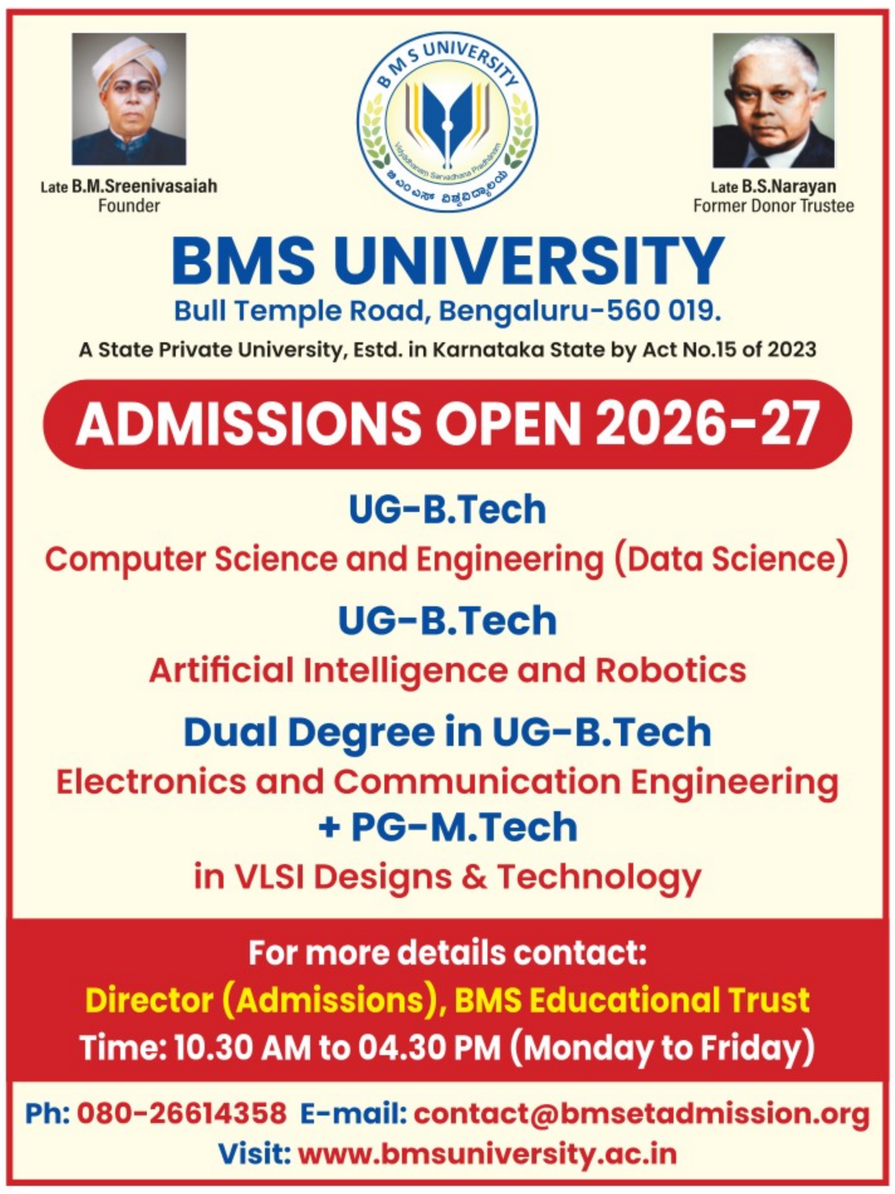
ASHA BHOSLE (1933-2026)

Part of heritage

Condoling the death of the singer, President Droupadi Murmu said it had created a huge void in the world of music. "She led her life on her own terms as an artist and as an individual. With her melodious and timeless voice, she enriched Indian music for decades," the President said.

Describing her as one of the most famous and versatile voices, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was deeply saddened by her passing. Her musical journey enriched the country's cultural heritage and touched the hearts of millions across the world, Mr. Modi said.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10
VOICE OF MODERN INDIA » PAGE 12



Hippo 'Hamsini' that attacked vet is in critical condition

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

Hamsini, the pregnant hippopotamus which attacked a young veterinarian at Tyavarekoppa Tiger and Lion Safari in Shivamogga and caused her death last month, is in critical condition following intrauterine foetal death.

The wildlife veterinarians treating the animal opined that the animal is in an infectious condition involving multiple organs. They suspect the origin of the infection could be the intrauterine foetal death, according to V.M. Amarakshara, Executive Director of the Zoo.

From Mysuru

The hippopotamus, aged about 12, was brought to Shivamogga Zoo from Mysuru zoo in 2022. Earlier, the animal was pregnant twice, and it lost both the babies. The last delivery was on March 23, 2025, and the calf died due to drowning. In the case of the first pregnancy in 2024, the newborn died after an attack by the male hippo soon after its birth.

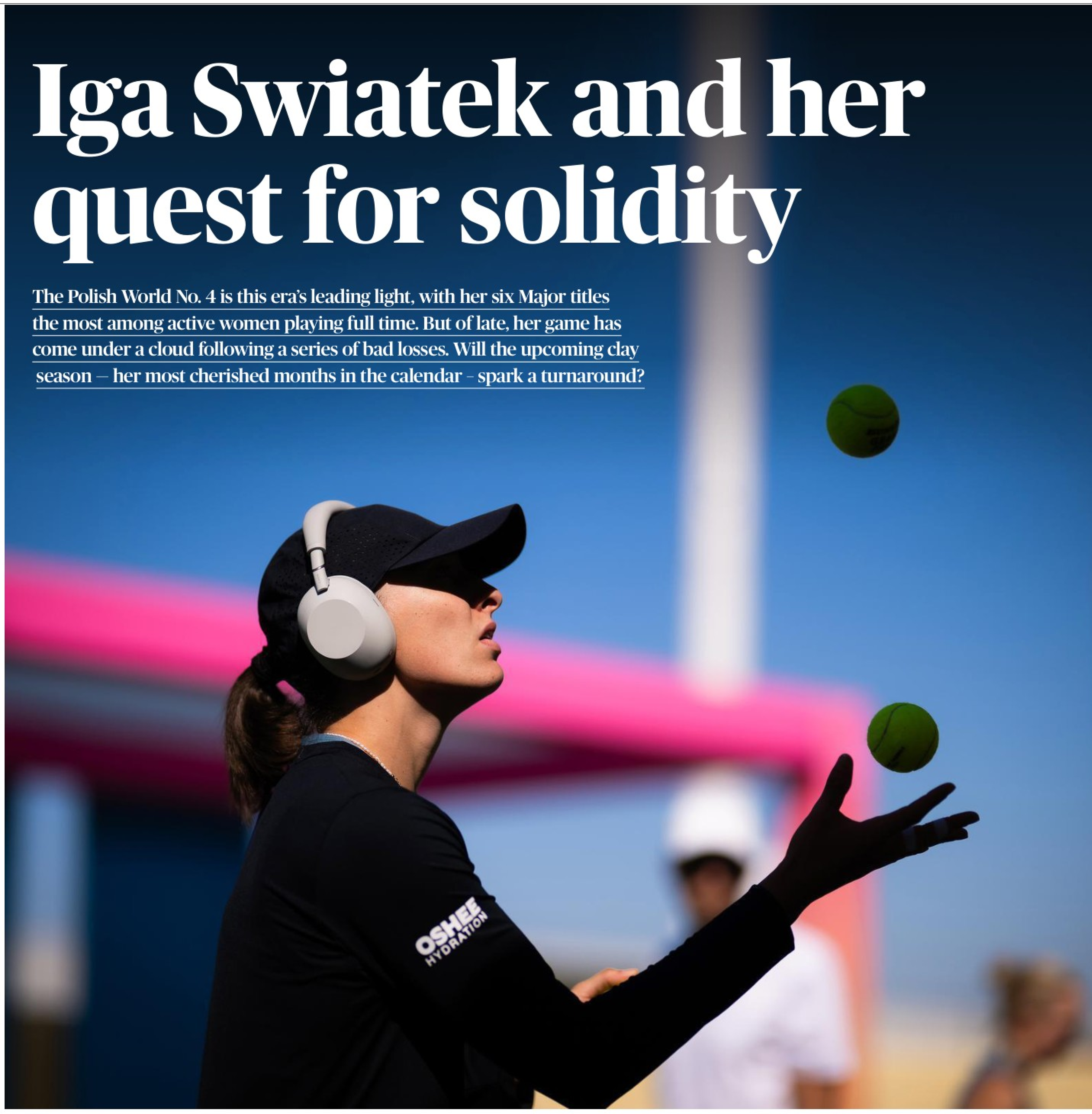
The normal gestation period of a hippo is around eight months, approximately 230-250 days. Doctors and animal caretakers notice pregnancy considering its behavioural changes and observing growth in the abdomen. It was separated from the male and kept in a separate enclosure on March 13, as the gestation period was about to complete. It stopped taking food, a normal behaviour expected ahead of delivery.

On March 19, the animal attacked Sameeksha Reddy, 27, a veterinarian apprentice, when she entered the enclosure to record its temperature using a thermal camera.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 4

Iga Swiatek and her quest for solidity

The Polish World No. 4 is this era's leading light, with her six Major titles the most among active women playing full time. But of late, her game has come under a cloud following a series of bad losses. Will the upcoming clay season — her most cherished months in the calendar – spark a turnaround?



N. Sudarshan

For most tennis players, a period like Iga Swiatek's last nine months will be a resounding success. The Pole won her maiden Wimbledon, the worthiest trophy the sport has to offer, clinched a WTA 1000 title in Cincinnati and bagged a WTA 500 crown in Seoul.

Wimbledon was her first title of any kind in over 12 months, and from a ranking of No. 8 just before the title run at the All England Club, she zoomed up to No. 2 in the world, a position she held until early last month.

'Worst nightmare'

But Swiatek, herself, doesn't believe this is enough. After an opening round reverse to compatriot and the then World No. 50 Magda Linette in Miami in March, a result the six-time Major champion called "the worst nightmare", she decided to split with coach Wim Fissette, who was with her when the 24-year-old achieved all of the above results.

Fissette, who had had stints with Grand Slam winners such as Kim Clijsters, Simona Halep, Victoria Azarenka, Angelique Kerber and Naomi Osaka, had joined forces with Swiatek in October 2024, and helped her navigate a reputation-hurting, month-long suspension later that year for a positive dope test.

But none of this seemed to matter, and Swiatek, who will begin her beloved clay-court season at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix in Stuttgart this week, has announced that she is pairing up with Francisco Roig, a long-time coach of Rafael Nadal, and someone who was part of the Spanish legend's team for 18 years and all of his 22 Major singles titles.

So what explains Swiatek's quandary? For one, she did not believe that the results were there to prove that the partnership with Fissette was working. Though she secured three titles last year, reached another final and climbed her way back up the rankings, the successes were concentrated in a narrow three-month window from late-June to late-September.

In seven individual competitions after the trophy-winning achievement in Seoul, Swiatek has not progressed past the quarterfinal. She has lost seven of her last eight matches against top-10 opponents, and two of her three most-recent defeats have come against those ranked 50 or below – Linette, and Maria Sakkari (No. 52) in Doha. The Linette loss was her first in the opening round since the 2021 WTA Finals. Together with the disappointment at Indian Wells, it was also the third time in the last five months that she had conceded back-to-back matches, and this too last happened at the same WTA Finals.

The trigger

"During the tournament in Doha, I realised that I didn't feel as good on the court as before," Swiatek told Polish media house *Sport.pl*. "Of course, at different tournaments, there can be various reasons for poor form, but I had the impression that I wasn't playing that well, and started to lose confidence.

"After the loss to Sakkari, we sat down and talked for a long time. We wondered what to change and how to approach the following week so that I could get back to my solid game. And indeed, before Indian Wells, we took some steps forward. But when I took everything into account, I concluded that I needed a change."

The use of the words "solid game" was intriguing. When she first burst onto the scene in 2020 by winning her maiden French Open as a teenager, Swiatek was a quintessential counter-puncher, sporting a top-spin heavy game and blessed with supreme athleticism.

Then, from 2022 to 2024 under coach Tomasz Wiktorowski, she infused significant amounts of no-holds-barred baseline aggression into her tennis as she amassed four Slams and spent 125 weeks as World No. 1 - the seventh best run in women's tennis history and the most among active players.

Aggression for Swiatek is not similar to the flat power that someone like Elena Rybakina hits with but closer to the 'Nadalesque' way of risk-taking and bravery shown in attacking the lines. The best reflection of this came in 2022, when she went on a 37-match winning streak - still the best this century - and lifted two Majors.

In fact, in the 76 matches she played that year, she won 22 sets by a 6-0 margin and 20 by 6-1. She was named the WTA Player of the Year in 2022, and bagged the honour again a year later.

But this style also had a downside to it. When a ground-stroke broke down, match-situation tightened and she was boxed into a corner, Swiatek's solution to break out of jail was to become more aggressive.

While champions often swear by this attitude, it is not a prudent choice when errors pile up and the need of the hour is a reset.

Nowhere is this reflected better than in her match-up against the two-time Slam winner from America Coco Gauff, who counts as her strengths some remarkable retrieving ability and propensity to extend rallies. Swiatek won 11 of their first 12 meetings, but has lost all four since then, and all of them in straight sets.

GETTY IMAGES

> I want to feel like a wall on the court again — making no mistakes and forcing my opponents to make them. I feel that tennis gives me the most pleasure when I am solid

Under Fissette, she attempted to temper her play a bit, seeking to add variety and patience, and tried unlocking different dimensions.

The first signs of this working came at the 2025 Australian Open when she came within a point of making her first-ever final in Melbourne before losing a tight three-setter to eventual winner Madison Keys. "I feel like the ball is listening to me," she said during the tournament.

Finding full expression

The summer of 2025 was when her partnership with Fissette found full expression as she won Wimbledon, thrashing Amanda Anisimova 6-0, 6-0 in a 57-minute final – a glorious display of controlled aggression and tactical nous.

At one point during the fortnight she even said: "You can still raise your intensity and be patient, and make smart decisions. It just means that you're going to play these shots really 100%. But it doesn't mean that they need to be like crazy."

The current predicament for Swiatek is that this makeover has started fraying and she is unable to decide which facets in her evolution as a player are worth keeping and which are to be tweaked or shunned altogether.

After Miami, she said she was "confused" and that tennis felt "complicated". That perhaps explains her desire to get back to the solid variety.

"I want to feel like a wall on the court again – making no mistakes and forcing my opponents to make them," she elaborated to *Sport.pl*. "I've always had that. It was my advantage and I exerted pressure on the court, and it gave me the upper hand.

"I feel that tennis gives me the most pleasure when I am solid. When I'm not, I take unnecessary risks and make many more errors. I want to return to that solidity. I'd like to have more variety in my game, and sometimes use what I do in training during matches – to have the courage to make those decisions. But for now, I'm focusing mainly on the first part: hard work and building solidity."

Swiatek has trusted Spaniard Roig, *in pic,* for this task, and his body of work suggests – at least on paper – that he may be the right person.

"The ideal coach should have an 'eye' for the game and an intuition of what the player needs, both in the short- and long-term," Swiatek said recently. "[The coach] should make the right decisions as to when to introduce new shots, when to start changes in the game, and when to build the game on the player's strengths."

Ring-side view

Roig had a ring-side view for the entirety of Nadal's career, and has both seen – and aided – the legend's evolution from a clay-court expert to an all-surface master. Swiatek famously idolises Nadal, and her favourite surface is clay, as seen from the fact that four of her six Majors are on the Parisian red dirt. But her triumphs at the 2022 US Open and 2025 Wimbledon show that she has space to grow.

Locked in two of the greatest rivalries with Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic, Nadal developed a style that was offensive and at the same time firm. Roig, alongside Nadal's uncle Toni and former World No. 1 Carlos Moya, is said to have had a big hand in the 14-time Roland-Garros winner consistently staying ahead of the curve.

This aspect will be important, for women's tennis is no longer in a state of flux, and is fast developing consistent rivalries.

Aryna Sabalenka has been the world's best since October 21, 2024 – the day Swiatek relinquished the top spot – and the four-time Slam winner from Belarus has reached the semifinals or better in 12 of her previous 13 Major appearances.

Gauff and Rybakina have both shed the tag of one-Slam wonders by securing the 2025 French Open and 2026 Australian Open respectively.

Statistically, Swiatek sits above all of them. The time has come to show why.

THE GIST

- In seven of her most recent individual competitions, Swiatek has not progressed past the quarterfinal. She has also lost seven of her last eight matches against top-10 opponents, and two of her three most-recent defeats have come against those ranked 50 or below

- From a counter-puncher to an all-out aggressor to her recent avatar of a calculated attacker, the Pole has undergone continuous transformation. Her quandary now lies in deciding which facets of her evolution are worth keeping and which are to be tweaked or shunned altogether

- The 24-year-old has now hired Francisco Roig as her coach. The Spaniard was part of Rafael Nadal's team for 18 years and all of his 22 Major singles titles, and had a ring-side view of the legend's journey from a clay-court expert to an all-surface master

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Parts of city draw groundwater far beyond sustainable limits

In areas such as Bengaluru East the extraction has touched 378%, as per the Groundwater Assessment Report-2025

Rishita Khanna
BENGALURU

Even after a year of above-normal rainfall and Cauvery V stage beginning to fill the gaps in the city's water supply, parts of Bengaluru continue to draw groundwater far beyond sustainable limits, with extraction in areas like Bengaluru East touching 378%, as per the Groundwater Assessment Report-2025.

Meanwhile, more residents are turning to paid tanker supplies. Apart from private players, BWSSB's 'Sanchari Cauvery' alone has seen over 45,000 orders worth ₹4.68 crore in less than a year, with demand peaking sharply.

The growing reliance on tanker-supplied water comes against a groundwater system that is already under sustained stress. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Tanker demand

Month-wise data shows that between May 2025 and April 8, 2026, a total of 45,448 orders were placed under the service, catering to 14,419 registered consumers. Demand built up through the year and peaked in February this year at 5,980 orders worth ₹65.38 lakh, with March recording 4,439 orders. In the first eight days of April alone, 1,071 orders worth ₹11.47 lakh were recorded.

As per the BWSSB data, bulk orders from apartments and institutions remained significant throughout much of the year and peaked at 3,120 in February. However, in March, bulk demand dropped sharply to 671 orders, even as individual online bookings rose to 3,768.

In February, an analysis by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), using groundwater data, flagged potential water shortages in 65 wards across Bengaluru, far beyond the 110 villages that were initially expected to be affected.

The study, which used the Internet of Things and Artificial Intelligence-based monitoring, identified areas such as Jakkur, Jalahalli, Hebbal, Horamavu, Ramamurthy Nagar, K.R. Puram, Doddabidarakallu, Kadu Malleshwara, Mahalakshmipuram, Kengeri, Konanakunte, Koramangala, and Chamarajpet among those likely to face stress.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, residents from these areas pointed to consistently irregular water supply and said the situation is likely to worsen as the summer gets harsher.

Sanchari Cauvery data

Month	Total orders	Total amount (₹ in lakh)	Consumers registered
January	4,241	48.49	687
February	5,980	65.38	1,079
March	4,439	42.17	1,693
April (as of April 8)	1,071	11.47	352
Total	15,731	167.51	3,811

Source: BWSSB

"This is only the beginning of summer, and I already pay ₹1,250 for a tanker, which lasts just three to four days. Families here end up spending repeatedly to meet basic needs," said Madhav Gowda, a resident of Hebbal. "Last week, we did not receive BWSSB supply at all, so we had to depend entirely on tankers."

Keshav Deshpande, a resident of Kengeri, said he was unable to book a BWSSB tanker despite trying. He added that authorities should not wait for peak summer to act, pointing out that water continues to be wasted in some areas as people use large quantities to clean their vehicles even as supply remains low.

This growing reliance on tanker-supplied water comes against a groundwater system that is already under sustained stress.

The latest assessment of dynamic groundwater resources in Karnataka places both Bengaluru Urban and Bengaluru Rural districts in the "over-exploited" category, where

annual groundwater extraction exceeds available resources. Neighbouring districts such as Kolar and Chikkaballapura show similar trends, while Bengaluru South (Ramanagara) and Tumakuru are close to that threshold, with extraction levels between 90% and 100% of availability.

At the district level, the stage of extraction across the State ranges from 25.44% in Ballari to 184.43% in Kolar. But at the taluk scale, the variation ranges from 5.91% in Madikeri to 378.85% in Bengaluru East, pointing to extreme "localised" stress.

Recharge conditions, however, offer limited relief. Nearly 44% of taluks record annual groundwater recharge of less than 100 mm. Much of the central, southern, and eastern dryland regions, including the Bengaluru region, depend heavily on groundwater due to limited surface water availability and deficit rainfall.

Even in areas where extraction appears lower in absolute terms, low recharge rates mean they continue to remain in semi-critical or over-exploited categories.

Traditional community diggers create percolation wells in city to augment groundwater

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

About 3 lakh recharge wells or percolation wells were dug by Karnataka's traditional well diggers, the Bhovi Vaddar community, in the city and its surroundings, in the last 15 years, according to Vishwanath S., an urban planner.

By channelling rainwater directly into underground aquifers, they replenish the natural water bank, eventually raising the water table enough to refill dry wells, said Mr. Vishwanath, who is also the founder of Rainwater Club and the director of Biome Environmental Solutions.

Well diggers Hanumantha and his wife Basamma near one of the dozens of percolation wells they dug at the Indira Gandhi Musical Fountain Park on Raj Bhavan Road. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

In city parks

Vibhinna India Foundation and United Way Bengaluru are among the NGOs that are actively working on the construction of percolation wells in the city. For instance, United Way Bengaluru has already built over 10,000 percolation wells in the city, including 440 in Lal Bagh, Cubbon Park, Indira Gandhi Musical Fountain Park on Raj Bhavan Road and 400 other locations.

The Department of Horticulture and the Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board help these NGOs identify locations where percolation wells are required. They plan to build another 20,000 percolation wells by 2028.

S. Ayyappa, a fifth-generation well digger of the Bhovi Vaddar community, said he and his team, comprising four members, dig five to six percolation wells in a week. Well digger Bhovi couple Hanumantha and his wife Basamma, who built percolation wells at the Indira Gandhi Musical Fountain Park, told *The Hindu* that they work together as a family.

In other venues

Sriram Ananthanarayan, director of New Initiatives, Partnerships and Impact at United Way Bengaluru, said they have assessed the campuses of private properties, universities, law and order departments, and defence establishments to dig more percolation wells. A recent water table assessment conducted at Lal Bagh, by a third party and validated by IIT-Madras, showed an increase of nearly 4 meters in the groundwater table, in three months after digging 440 percolation wells, he claimed.

Mr. Ananthanarayan said, as per the NGO's recent assessments, each subwatershed (a smaller, nested drainage area within a larger watershed) required a minimum of 50,000 to 60,000 percolation wells, for an area of eight to 10 kms.

Bengaluru has nine such subwatersheds within an 80 to 90 kms radius of the city. The Bommanahalli zone's subwatershed was assessed and found to have an average of 1-2 meters increase in groundwater, thanks to percolation wells that exist in the surrounding areas.

Lakes in the city

Lakes are the largest natural percolation open wells, as when they get filled, nearly all borewells in the area get recharged. Bengaluru currently has only 210 lakes, of the over 2000 lakes that it used to have, and it has around 6,000 defunct and abandoned borewells.

Student kidnapped for ransom by friends rescued within five hours

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 20-year-old college student who was kidnapped for ransom near a hostel in BTM Layout was rescued within five hours, with City Police arresting four accused – the victim's college mates – in a swift operation.

The victim, identified as Rishab Mohanty, a first-year student of Jain College, was staying in a hostel in BTM Layout. Police said the incident occurred on Saturday night, when information was received on the Namma 112 emergency helpline about a student being forcibly taken away in a car.

Acting on the alert, Madiwala Police registered a case and launched an immediate probe. A team led by Inspector Mohammed M.A. traced the vehicle and rescued the victim within five hours.

The arrested accused have been identified as Nikunj, Shourya Agarwal, Syed Bilal, and Aditya Bhonsle.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the accused allegedly kidnapped Rishab and took him to Mr. Bilal's house, where he was confined and allegedly assaulted. They forced him to call his friends and arrange ₹50,000 as ransom.

Police said the accused claimed that the act was an attempt to recover money they had earlier lent to the victim.

However, investigators suspect a premeditated plan driven by financial motives.

Further probe has also indicated that the group may be habitual offenders and had earlier abducted a student from Andhra Pradesh and extorted ₹40,000.

All four accused have been taken into custody, and the police are verifying their criminal background.

Assets worth ₹14 crore found during raid

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

During a recent raid on the houses and premises of Ajaysingh Rajpur, an assistant executive engineer of the District Urban Development Cell, Lokayukta officials found moveable and immoveable assets worth over ₹14 crore. These assets include three houses in Belagavi, five sites in Saundatti, Hukkeri and Hubballi, 5.96 kg of gold, 5 kg of silver, fixed deposits valued at ₹3.12 crore, a car and a motorbike. The raid was conducted on seven locations. Investigation, including estimation, is still on. The engineer joined the department as a daily wage worker. His service was regularised later. He has a few years of service left.

Special vehicle inspection drive held

BENGALURU: A special vehicle inspection drive was carried out at multiple naka points across the North-East Division.

841 vehicles were inspected and 152 petty cases were registered.

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER
No. SNT-GSU-All-2026-27-01 Dated : 09.04.2026
CPM / GSU / NWR Ajmer on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders for the following work up to 15.00 Hrs. on the mentioned date. **Tender No. :** SNT-GSU-All-2026-27-01 **Name of work :** S&T work in C/W Provision of 04 Nos. of Tower wagon shed at BNGM, RANI, BJNR and UDZ/UMRA stations over Ajmer Division NWR. **Approximate cost of work :** Rs. 3,27,67,538.62/- **Bid Security:** Rs. 6,55,400.00/- **Date & Time of closing E-Tender :** 04.05.2026 at 15.00 Hrs. **Date & Time of opening E-Tender :** 04.05.2026 at 15.30 Hrs.**The details of above E - tender are available on website www.ireps.gov.in** 526-CR/26
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CHANGE OF NAME
I, Shilpa Walimbe W/o Abhijeet Walimbe, residing at 340, 13th Cross, 3rd Block, BEL Layout, Vidyaranyapura, Bangalore North, Vidyaranyapura, Bengaluru - 560097, do hereby solemnly declare that **Shilpa Walimbe** & **Shilpa Abhijeet Walimbe** both the names are one and the same. I further declare that I have changed my name from **Shilpa Abhijeet Walimbe** to **Shilpa Walimbe** vide affidavit dated 09.04.2026, sworn before Notary Sulakshana, Bengaluru.

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY
खुली ई–निविदा सूचना
सं. M-137/Works/C&W/JP/CCC/KWP दिनांक: 09.04.2026 मंडल रेल प्रबंधक (कैरिज व वैगन) उत्तर पश्चिम रेलवे जयपुर द्वारा भारत के राष्ट्रपति महोदय की ओर से नीचे दिये गये कार्य के लिए दी गई तिथि को 15.00 बजे तक ई–निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। कोई भी मैन्युयल टेण्डर स्वीकार नहीं किया जायेगा और अगर कोई मैन्युयल टेण्डर प्राप्त होता है तो उस पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा। **1. ई–निविदा संख्या :** M-137/Works/C&W/JP/CCC/KWP **2. कार्य का नाम व स्थान :** Supply, Installation, Testing, and Commissioning of Body and under Gear Scanning System on a turnkey basis for Coach Care Complex, Khatipura. **3. अनुमानित लागत :** ₹ 7902460.00 मात्र (₹ उनासी लाख दो हजार चार सौ साठ मात्र) **4. बिड सिक्योरिटी राशी :** ₹ 158100 मात्र (रु एक लाख अट्ठावन हजार एक सौ मात्र) **5. ई–निविदा की अंतिम दिनांक और समय :** 04.05.2026 समय 15:00 बजे **6. ई–निविदा खोलने की दिनांक और समय :** 04.05.2026 समय 15:30 बजे उक्त ई–निविदा के सम्बध में विस्तृत जानकारी रेलवे की वेबसाइट **www.ireps.gov.in** पर पर उपलब्ध हैं। 529-CR/26
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PUBLIC NOTICE
Whereas my clients **1) Sri. DINESH KUMAR M** S/o. Sri. Murugan P.K. Aged about 33 years, Residing at No. 2, Siddegowda Street, Near Lalbagh Main Gate, Doddamavalli, Bangalore -560004. **2) Sri. RAGHUNAATHAN S** S/o. Sri. K. Solaiyan Aged about 24 years, Residing at No. 56, Yellappa Street, Chikkamavalli, Basavanagudi, Bangalore-560004, they intending to purchase the under mentioned property hereunder and hereinafter referred to as the **'Schedule Property'** from **1) Mr. TEJO RAMSINGH** Aged about 44 years, Son of Mr. A. Mahender Singh, **2) Mr. V. MANJUNATH SINGH** Aged about 35 years, Son of Mr. A Vijayender Singh, Both residing at New No.33-30/1, Officers Colony, Near Bank of India, R.K. Puram, Malkajgiri Dist, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh-500056, who claims to be the legal heirs and absolute owners of the **'Schedule Property'.** Any other person/s who have any kind of right, claims, interest, over the 'Schedule Property' are herewith called upon to file their claims before the undersigned within **Seven (07) days** from the date of publication of their notice 'Kannada and English' News Paper with the relevant and concerned documents. If no such claim is filed within the given time my client shall proceed and purchase the `Schedule Property' as 'no claims subsisting'.
SCHEDULE OF THE PROPERTY
ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF Immovable Residential Property Bearing Municipal No.39/1, Situated at Sadara Mudalappa Cross, **PID No. 61-15-39/1, E-Asti No. 1988917713,** Bangalore, and Measuring: East to West - 24'-0" feet and North to South - 63'-2" feet, the Unique property ID No (PID) allotted to this property is 61-15-39/1, BBMP Ward No. 61, Mavalli, and bounded on the **East by :** Private Property **West by:** Private Property, **North by:** Property acquired by means of Exchange Deed by I. Vishwanath now Private property, **South by:** Mudalappa Cross.
Sd/- B. C. KEERTHI KISHORE, ADVOCATE
Office: No.13, 3rd Cross, 8th Main, Jayanagar 1st Block East, BDA Layout, Bangalore-560 011
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Booking to be opened from 15th April, 2026 At 06:00 PM Evening
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Chardham Yatra Registration is mandatory
Pushkar Singh Dhami
Chief Minister, Uttarakhand
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Study unravels why men experience more skin infections than women

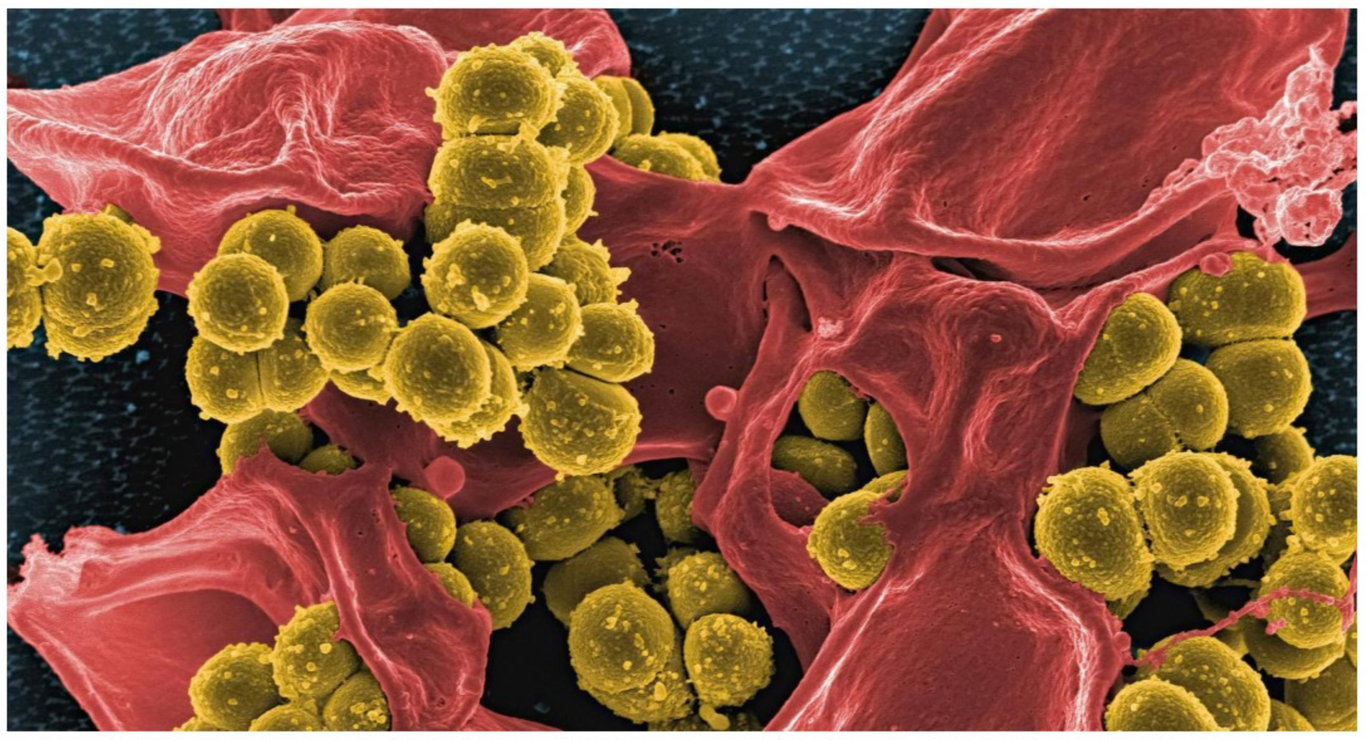
Hormones may do more than regulate mood, behaviour, and reproduction — and new findings suggest they may also determine how vulnerable we are to skin infections and how we fight them; male sex hormones, which include testosterone, help bacteria communicate and cause skin infections by activating a bacterial signalling system

Kavi Bharathi R.

Men experience more skin infections than women – doctors have known this for a while. They have proposed both behavioural and physiological reasons for this difference but the exact mechanism has been unclear.

Recently, scientists at UT Southwestern Medical Centre in Texas in the U.S. reported that the male sex hormones, androgens, which include testosterone, help bacteria communicate and cause skin infections by activating a bacterial signalling system called quorum sensing.

Their findings, published in *Nature Microbiology,* show that reducing testosterone levels in mouse models increased the animals' resistance to infections. When the researchers applied testosterone topically to female mice, the infection became more severe.



A colourized scanning electron micrograph of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) bacteria, shown in gold, interacting with a human neutrophil, in red. NIAID

THE GIST

Skin's sebaceous glands can produce hormones, making testosterone readily available to microbes living on the skin's surface. This is relevant to bacteria like *Staphylococcus aureus*

S. aureus is the leading cause of skin infections worldwide. It commonly colonises the skin and nose but when it enters the bloodstream, it can cause septicaemia, a life-threatening condition

Instead of killing the bacterium, the researchers wanted to suppress its virulence and restore it to a harmless state

Skin's hormones

Sex hormones are generally thought to be produced by the testes or ovaries. However, Tamia Harris-Tryon, Associate Professor of dermatology and immunology at UT Southwestern, and her team had previously shown using an advanced technique called liquid chromatography tandem mass spectrometry that the skin also generates and secretes extremely small concentrations of these hormones.

"We continue to be fascinated by how the skin makes sex hormones and how this changes in skin diseases," Dr. Harris-Tryon said.

The skin is a hormonally responsive organ. Its sebaceous glands can produce hormones, making testosterone readily available to microbes living on the skin's surface. This is relevant to bacteria like *Staphylococcus aureus*. They don't begin an infection right away. Instead, they wait and multiply, and activate their disease-causing machinery only once the colony is dense enough to have a fighting chance. Bioinformatic analysis further revealed that the bacteria also respond to the host's hormones.

"Together, these observations led the team to explore a potential connection between host hormonal changes and microbial dynamics on the skin," Maria Sindhura John, the study's first author and a postdoctoral researcher at UT Southwestern, said.

To test whether testosterone from the skin drives infection, the researchers engineered mice that were unable to produce testosterone in the skin. These animals had markedly less severe infections and less skin barrier damage compared to normal mice. When testosterone was applied to hormone-deficient female mice, the infection became more severe.

The effect was specific to androgens. Female sex hormones, oestradiol and progesterone, didn't affect the bacteria's quorum sensing – where bacteria release chemical signals into their environment and as the bacterial population grows, the concentration of these signals rises.

"This elegant study shows that host-derived androgen hormones modulate the quorum sensing system to make the bacteria more virulent," Ferric C. Fang, a clinician scientist at the University of Washington School of Medicine, who wasn't involved in the study, said. "Thus, the bacteria not only talk to each other, but the host also talks to the bacteria. This may help to explain why men are more susceptible to staphylococcal skin infections than women and could lead to new approaches for the treatment or prevention of these infections."

Beyond antibiotics

S. aureus is the leading cause of skin infections worldwide. It commonly colonises the skin and nose but when it enters the bloodstream, it can cause septicaemia, a life-threatening condition that could lead to organ failure.

These infections have been increasingly harder to treat, thanks to the rise of multi-drug-resistant *S. aureus*, a strain that resists methicillin and other related antibiotics. Doctors have associated it with prolonged hospital stays and higher mortality.

Conventional antibiotics try to kill bacteria or inhibit their growth, which creates strong evolutionary pressures that encourage bacteria to develop resistance to antibiotics. However, the new study targeted quorum sensing, which disrupts the bacteria's ability to coordinate harmful behaviours without necessarily threatening their survival.

"This also reduces selective pressure for resistance and may preserve beneficial microbes, making it a potentially more sustainable strategy in combating antimicrobial resistance," Dr. Sindhura John said.

> The bacteria not only talk to each other, but the host also talks to the bacteria. This may help to explain why men are more susceptible to staphylococcal skin infections than women
>
> **FERRIC C. FANG**
> Clinician scientist at the University of Washington School of Medicine

The researchers identified a mirror-image form of testosterone called enantiomer-testosterone (*ent*-T). While testosterone activated quorum sensing, *ent*-T blocked the bacterial communication pathway and reduced toxicity in human skin cells, red blood cells, and neutrophils in laboratory experiments. Computational modelling revealed how *ent*-T interacted with the bacterial targets, pointing to a possible strategy to tackle antibiotic resistance.

"This was an unexpected but exciting discovery," Dr. Sindhura John said.

'Imagine someone is angry'

While studying how bacteria respond to natural testosterone and exploring structurally similar molecules to understand the specificity of the response, they found bacteria could distinguish between subtle molecular differences. This opened a new avenue to design compounds that can deliberately switch off harmful bacterial behaviour.

"Imagine if someone is angry – you don't remove or kill the person," Dr. Sindhura John said. "Rather, you calm them down so they behave normally again. We are doing something similar with bacteria."

Similarly, *S. aureus* is usually a normal skin resident but it becomes harmful when its environment changes. Instead of killing it, the researchers want to suppress its virulence and restore it to a harmless state. "This way, we reduce antibiotic resistance and maintain skin balance," Dr. Sindhura John added.

The interaction between humans and the resident bacteria is complex and poorly understood. "This study provides an interesting new angle, with the potential for exploitation to reveal new ways to combat important human infections," Simon J. Foster, the West Riding Chair in microbiology at the University of Sheffield, said.

Early phase trials

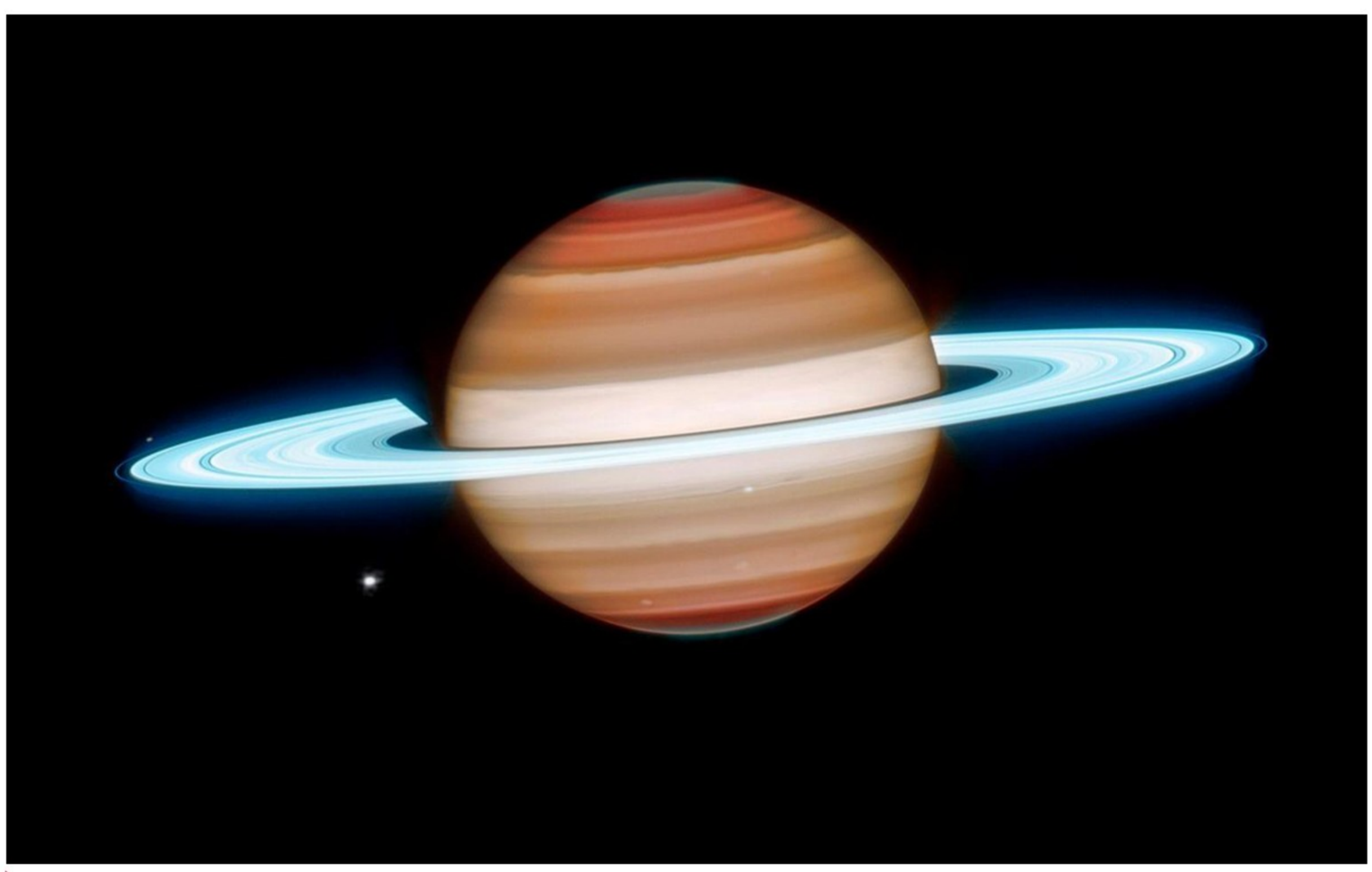
The researchers aim to test these findings in human skin models and move to early-phase trials to assess safety and efficacy. They are also keen to understand how these mechanisms operate within the complexity of the human microbiome.

"If successful, this approach could represent a paradigm shift in how we treat infections - moving away from broadly killing bacteria toward more precise modulation of their behaviour," Dr. Sindhura John said.

This approach could lead to therapies that are more effective, less disruptive to the body's natural microbiome, and less likely to drive antibiotic resistance.

(Kavi Bharathi R. is a science writer based at the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru.bharathi.colors@gmail.com)

BIG SHOT



In March, the Webb and Hubble space telescopes teamed up to observe Saturn and acquire a richer understanding of its atmosphere. This image shows Webb's view. The rings are bright because they are made of water ice, which is very reflective. The image also highlights the jet stream called the ribbon wave across the northern mid-latitudes. NASA

QUESTION CORNER

Nature's signals

Q: What are sentinel species?

A: A sentinel species is a species whose members' health signals the condition of the ecosystem in which they live. Scientists monitor them because they are among the first to respond to stressors in their environment, such as pollution and disease, and their response also tends to be more apparent than most other species.

In other words, they can provide early warnings of ecosystem decline.

Sentinel species tend to occupy a fixed territory and live long enough to accumulate toxins. They also have physiologies that amplify the effects of environmental change. Thus, when something goes wrong in their habitat, they show it first.

The most common example is frogs. Their skin is permeable and absorbs whatever enters the water or soil around them, making them very sensitive to pesticides and pathogens. A declining frog population has often been a sign of wider ecological stress, even before other indicators detect the problem.

Canaries in coal mines worked on the same principle: the bird's faster metabolism made it succumb to carbon monoxide before human miners could notice anything. Researchers also use honeybees to track agricultural chemical loads, polar bears to monitor Arctic contaminant accumulation, and certain fish species to detect industrial runoff.

The IUCN declared the emperor penguin to be an endangered species on April 9. AFP

On April 9, the International Union for Conservation of Nature declared the emperor penguin to be an endangered species. Emperor penguins are sentinel species for warming in the Antarctic region. Climate change is projected to halve their population by the 2080s.

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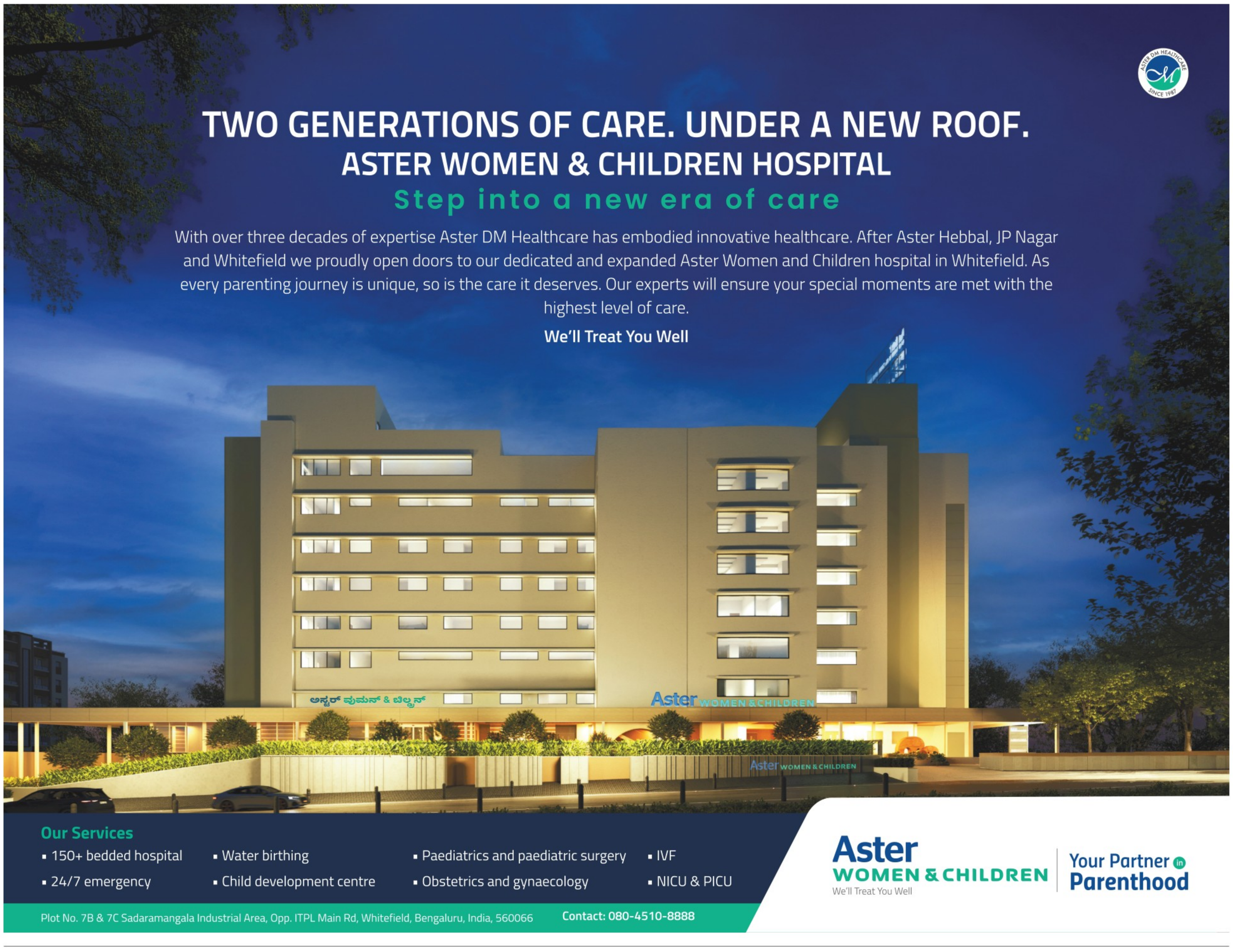

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Of war and peace

Why we need to go beyond the history of war and conflict in our educational institutions

Mini Krishnan

Winning is so deeply embedded in our psyche that history is generally considered a chronicle of power; a list of who crushed whom and descriptions of rivalries amongst the strong.

Focus on conflict

The destruction of Troy in 1193 BCE, Alexander's defeat of Raja Purushothaman in 326 BCE, the Norman conquest of England in 1066, the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and the First Battle of Panipat in 1556. The siege of ... the war of ... the sacking of ... After all the fiery wars came the Cold War.

The history of war and conflict is a focus on the political trends and divisive forces of the world and has traditionally been a part of the political agenda of education. "Students need to know the history of their nation," is the foundation of this study programme. They do, they do. But is that all?

For a long time, it was uppermost in peoples' minds because hand-to-hand skirmishes and field battles between countries and adjacent regions were continuous, with the lives of whole populations under threat all the time.

Today, proxy wars are fought and, for reasons of national face-keeping or hand-washing, we continue to live with huge and unjust invasions of fellow humans that are far away enough to not disturb our day-to-day lives.

Poor second

My concern is: why does the intellectual history of mankind come a poor second to the history of bloody struggles between countries and civilisations? The calendar of man's artistic and technological ascent should be given more importance than it is. Given the academic atmosphere of classrooms, it could surely be both interesting and relevant.

Look at just one example in the history of ideas: When Islam and Christianity were locked in a fight to the death for the control of the Holy land, a community of European monks and scholars were in peaceful contact with their more advanced colleagues: scholars who were producing works of science and technology through translations into and out of Arabic in the great knowledge centres and libraries of Baghdad. There are many such instances.

Can we not also bring the untold his-and-her stories of the "daily"ness of the human experience into classrooms? What were peoples' lives like away from the sites of war? For instance, given the recent spread of interest in global cuisine, the history of food and habitats would be fascinating. Surely a good way to expand geography classes? Climate, vegetation, food habits, and food history.

Missing element

The missing element in social awareness of the nature of the human experience in History is a vital image of the day-to-day measures of life. The very language of teaching and the importance teachers give to research and human ingenuity would go a long way in shifting the schoolgoer's mind away from the nervous excitement that conflict generates.

What history and whose story? Telling students stories other than war stories would be a step towards their holistic development. Children raised with some emphasis on the positive side of human evolution would be less likely to develop prejudices about 'foreigners' or hostility towards people of different beliefs and social practices.

No amount of academic achievement can make up for the lack of emotional and life skills. What if one of our students grew up to be a brilliant scientist whose children are terrified of her? Is that the successful human being we want to raise?

The greatest life skill is learning to understand that other people are as important as yourself and developing an empathetic attitude to all life.

Start early

This training can begin at an early age: caring for people around you. It is the lack of this value that leads to all the misunderstandings, fears, and even hatred of anyone who is not like oneself. In fact we have been watching with agony and alarm at what is happening in West Asia where one group of people think nothing of taking away the rights and lives of another.

Without value education, without peace education, our institutions are perfect training grounds for war because they place such a premium on success for the self and the self alone.

At least a part of History in classrooms should be an account of our humanity and our children should receive the universal message from the Mundaka Upanishad: "Like a thousand sparks from a blazing fire are we..." of the same nature, the same origin. Let's give the history of peace a place in our institutions.

The writer consults for the Tamil Nadu Textbook and Educational Services Corporation (TNTB & ESC).

Initiative

ideaForge Technology has launched the Who Are the Next Idiots? initiative in collaboration with IIT-Bombay.

Eligibility: UG/PG students or recent graduates with concept-stage or early prototype ideas in deep tech

Deadline: April 30. https://tinyurl.com/2p9jjfdb

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Percentage increase in gross GST collection in February

8.1 % increase in gross GST collection sees revenue reach ₹1.83 lakh crore in February. Higher growth in revenues from imports and improved domestic sales lead the drive. Gross domestic revenue rose 5.3% to about ₹1.36 lakh crore, while gross import revenue climbed 17.2% to ₹47,837 crore. Refunds rose 10.2% at ₹22,595 crore. PTI

Number of flights to West Asia cancelled by Pakistan due to war

184 international flights from Pakistan to West Asia have been cancelled since Saturday owing to the escalating situation after the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran. Flight services in the region have been disrupted or suspended after the closure of the Dubai and Abu Dhabi airports which serve as a major hub for connecting flights to Europe, U.S., South America. PTI

Worth of projects inaugurated by Prime Minister in Madurai

4,400 crore-worth projects were inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday. He laid foundation for four-laning of Marakkanam–Puducherry and Paramakudi–Ramanathapuram of key NH routes. He inaugurated eight redeveloped railway stations in Tamil Nadu and the Chennai Beach–Egmore 4th Line. PTI

Number of calls received by special helpdesk in Kerala

381 calls have been received so far by the 24-hour special helpdesk set up by NORKA Roots, after the Israel–Iran conflict. It was established to assist Non-Resident Keralites (NRKs) and their families amid escalating tensions in the region. Of the total calls received, 137 were from abroad and 244 from within the country, the Chief Minister's Office said in a statement. PTI

Number of people killed in a blast at Nagpur factory

17 people were killed and 18 others injured in a blast at a mining and industrial explosives manufacturing factory in Maharashtra's Nagpur district on Sunday. The incident comes a day after a blast at a cracker unit in Andhra Pradesh's Kakinada district claimed 21 lives. The blast took place at the SBL Energy Limited factory, at Raulgaon in Katol tehsil, Nagpur district. PTI

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Between 14 years and the gallows

The Sattankulam trial judge accepted the Sriharan bar in his sentencing order and was forced to the rope; even ordinary life imprisonment, the judge wrote, would let the convicts come out in fourteen years through determined effort

LETTER AND SPIRIT

V. Venkatesan

On April 6, the Madurai trial court in *Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) v Sridhar* sentenced nine suspended policemen to death. They had killed P. Jayaraj and his son J. Bennix in police custody in June 2020. Judge G. Muthukumaran's reasoning is being celebrated as judicial intolerance of uniformed brutality. It is also worth reading as a confession. The case fell within the rarest of rare, he wrote, in terms that left no room for life imprisonment

The doctrine he was applying comes from *Bachan Singh v State of Punjab* (1980). There a Constitution Bench held that the death sentence may be imposed only in the rarest of rare cases when the "alternative option of life imprisonment is unquestionably foreclosed". The Sattankulam judge believed it was foreclosed. The trial court had only two options. It could send the convicts away for life. Or it could send them to the gallows. What it could not do was occupy the middle ground constitutional courts have fashioned since 2008. That ground is a life sentence quantified in years, twenty or thirty or forty, served without remission. The intermediate sentence has become a fixture of Indian capital jurisprudence. It remains off-limits to the trial courts themselves.

The doctrinal source is the 3:2 majority of the Constitution Bench in *Union of India v V. Sriharan @ Murugan* in December 2015. The majority built on *Swamy Shraddananda v State of Karnataka* (2008). It held that only the High Courts and the Supreme Court could commute death to a fixed-term life sentence beyond statutory remission. Sessions courts, the bench ruled, could not invent a special category of sentencing. The principle has since been reaffirmed in *Kiran v State of Karnataka* (2025) and applied in *Sukhdev Yadav v State (NCT of Delhi)* (2025).

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

The Sattankulam trial judge accepted the bar in his own sentencing order. He cited the December 2025 *Kiran* ruling which held that Sessions Courts cannot bridge "the hiatus between 14 years and death". In paragraph 323 of his order, Judge Muthukumaran recorded that the Sessions Court has no power to impose imprisonment for life until death. The defence for the fourth accused had pleaded the same limitation, citing the same authority.

Limitations on Trial Courts

The justification offered in *Sriharan* is surprisingly thin. The majority called the special category an inherent power of constitutional courts, unavailable to trial courts. Yet trial courts already wield the most consequential sentencing power the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) recognises. If they can extinguish life under *Bachan Singh,* why may they not impose the lesser sentence of life without remission?

The Supreme Court has acknowledged the trap. In *Kiran*, the Bench described Shraddananda's concern: ordinary life imprisonment amounts to fourteen years with remission, leaving a gap that grave crimes outstrip. The special category was devised to bridge the hiatus. *Sriharan* then withheld the bridge from the trial courts most likely to need it.

The consequence in Sattankulam is plain. Even ordinary life imprisonment, the judge wrote, would let the convicts come out in fourteen years through determined effort. Section 433A of the CrPC fixed that minimum. He found the interval derisory for the brutality before him. *Sriharan* denied him the calibrated alternative. He could not direct, say, thirty years of actual incarceration without remission, a sentence second only to death. He could only choose between a sentence he considered inadequate and the rope. He chose the rope.

The defenders of *Sriharan* must be heard. Uniformity, they argue, requires the special category to remain with constitutional courts, lest sessions judges impose idiosyncratic non-remittable terms. They invoke appellate scrutiny in death references as the only safeguard. Trial courts also impose death sentences, subject to confirmation under Section 366 of the Code. Uniformity is achieved through appellate correction, not through pre-emptive denial of jurisdiction.

A sharper critique is empirical. The Square Circle Clinic at NALSAR released its Annual Statistics Report on the death penalty in February. Its findings cut against any easy reading of the Sattankulam result. In *Manoj v State of Madhya Pradesh* (2022), the Supreme Court directed trial courts to gather information about the prisoner's background, mental health and prison conduct before imposing a death sentence. These guidelines are routinely ignored. *Vasanta Sampat Dupare* (2025) elevated compliance with *Manoj* to a fair trial right under Article 21, without changing trial court practice.

At the same time, the special category *Shraddananda* devised has become the rule rather than the exception at the appellate level. All five Supreme Court commutations in 2025 went to whole-life without remission.

The Sattankulam verdict will travel to the Madras High Court on confirmation. The Madurai Bench has followed this case since taking *suo motu* cognisance in June 2020. It will have the option *Sriharan* denied the trial judge. It may convert the sentences into fixed-term life imprisonment without remission. That outcome would expose the contradiction. A special category trial courts cannot use is becoming the default above them.

According to the Square Circle Clinic's report, most trial courts impose death sentences without the mitigation hearings *Manoj* demands. The Sattankulam judge did hold them, and the architecture failed him anyway. Extending the special category of fixed-term sentencing to him would appear to remedy one rung of a broken ladder. Yet reconsideration of the post-*Bachan Singh* edifice would still be overdue.

(The author is a journalist and legal researcher.)

THE GIST

- The death sentences for the Sattankulam custodial killings highlight a conflict between the "rarest of rare" doctrine and legal restrictions, with the trial judge choosing the death penalty over an inadequate life sentence because judicial precedents barred them from imposing a fixed-term, non-remittable sentence.
- Critics argue this outcome highlights a "broken ladder" in Indian jurisprudence, where the Supreme Court's *Sriharan* decision forces trial courts into binary sentencing (death or '14-year jail') by withholding the "middle ground" of long-term imprisonment, a tool now default at the appellate level.

Are biomass stoves a cleaner, cheaper alternative to LPG?

Can modern cookstoves turn the return of firewood into a sustainable alternative during the LPG crisis?

Ankit Mathur

The story so far:

Owing to the LPG crisis, many areas–especially rural regions–have reported going back to firewood that are generally seen as increasing drudgery for women, while also causing pollution and health hazards.

Are today's firewood-based stoves less polluting and benign to human use?

Modern biomass stoves, often called improved cookstoves (ICS), represent a major step up from traditional cooking methods. Unlike old-fashioned mud stoves, they can cut fuel use by up to two-thirds while dramatically reducing smoke.

Traditional "chulhas" waste most of their heat through poor airflow and have an efficiency of barely 10%. By contrast, modern stoves reach thermal efficiency levels of 38% to 45%. Technologies such as secondary aeration help to catch soot and harmful gases before they turn into smoke.

How can mass firewood-based cooking be made sustainable?

Cooking with firewood can be sustainable, provided the wood is harvested and used responsibly. Firewood is a renewable resource as long as the rate of extraction does not exceed the rate of regrowth. Since improved cookstoves burn fuel more efficiently, they can reduce the amount of wood needed for a meal.

Modern cookstoves can also run on alternative biomass fuels, including pellets and briquettes made from sawdust or agricultural waste. This widens the fuel base and takes some pressure off raw firewood.

Financing is key to achieving deployment at scale. Emissions savings enabled by improved cookstoves can be tracked and turned into carbon credits, creating a funding stream that makes stoves more affordable for lower-income families.

What about the cost of equipment and fuel expenses?

Upfront costs vary significantly. Household models start below ₹2,000, while commercial systems can exceed ₹20,000, depending on the manufacturer and purchase channel (whether direct, through e-commerce, or via distributors). For low- and middle-income households, managing upfront costs can be made easier through financing partnerships involving microfinance, CSR programs, and carbon finance.

The principal operating cost is fuel, and modern cookstoves' high thermal efficiency can significantly reduce fuel requirements. Today's stoves have cut firewood consumption by more than 50%.

Firewood is highly cost-effective compared with LPG, especially during the ongoing supply crunch when commercial LPG rates in major cities have exceeded ₹100/kg. From the wide range of prices available for different firewood types, it is possible to assume a rough average cost of around ₹10/kg (if firewood is being bought instead of being simply scavenged). Considering that 4 kilos of firewood deliver the same cooking energy output as 1 kg of commercial LPG (in an improved cookstove), firewood could potentially offer cost savings of well over 60%.

What supply chain would be needed for mass adoption? Will this be a massive investment?

Adopting biomass cookstoves on a large scale absolutely does not require a massive investment in fuel supply chains. Since the primary fuels - like firewood, crop waste, and dung cakes - are already widely available in rural and semi-urban areas, there is less need for expensive, centralised infrastructure.

Scaling up is therefore more about strengthening distribution networks. Success depends on improving logistics, last-mile delivery, and local partnerships. Just as importantly, building user awareness and providing reliable after-sales support are essential to making sure these stoves remain a permanent part of daily life.

(The author is co-founder and CEO, Greenway Grameen)

THE GIST

- Improved Cookstoves (ICS) offer a sustainable solution by increasing thermal efficiency, reducing smoke, and cutting firewood usage by over 50%.
- Mass adoption of efficient biomass stoves does not require massive infrastructure investment, as local, renewable fuels (wood, agricultural waste) are readily available.

Underpass work to begin after a decade

It will be taken up by Bengaluru City Central Corporation at the Wind Tunnel Junction, as part of the plan to make HAL Airport Road signal-free

Chetan B.C.
BENGALURU

A decade after an underpass at Wind Tunnel Junction was announced as part of a project to make HAL Airport Road signal-free, the plan remained on paper. Now, the Bengaluru City Central Corporation (BCCC) has finally begun the process.

The underpass works will be taken up in three phases: alternative arrangements for traffic moving on the stretch, groundwork and installation of magic boxes, and construction of ramps. If everything goes as planned, the corporation aims to complete the work within 100 days.

A source in the corporation told *The Hindu* that they are working on drawings to create alternative routes for the traffic on the stretch. The plan is not to divert traffic to a different route but to facilitate the flow of vehicles on the same stretch by utilising the sides of the roads and adjoining private properties. "The only alternative for the HAL Airport Road is Old Madras Road, which is also clogged most of the day. So, we are drawing up a new plan to facilitate traffic movement on the same stretch," the source said.

The Bengaluru Traffic Police asked officials of the civic body to sign an undertaking, stating that they will adhere to the deadline and reopen the stretch for traffic on the mutually agreed date. ALLEN EGENUSE J.

According to him, there is a road inside the NAL and ISRO campuses, which are adjoining and run parallel to the 300-metre stretch where the underpass is proposed. Temporarily, this road will be utilised to retain traffic movement on the stretch.

BTP approval

The renewed efforts follow the BTP's conditional approval for the corporation to take up work on the stretch. The BTP has asked officials of the civic body to sign an undertaking, stating that they would adhere to the deadline and reopen the stretch for traffic on the mutually agreed date. Apart from this, the police have laid out over ten conditions related to traffic movement and on-ground work.

This comes in the backdrop of delays by civic bodies in completing white-topping works on J.C. Road and Panathur Road. Like those stretches, the HAL Airport Road is also a crucial link, a high-density corridor that also witnesses frequent ambulance movement due to the presence of several multispeciality hospitals in close proximity and also VIP movement due to the HAL Airport.

"During peak hours, this road sees substantial traffic, and any worsening due to partial closure will impact at least five major roads, including Old Madras Road, 80 Feet Road, and 100 Feet Road," a senior traffic police official told *The Hindu*.

However, an official from the central corporation said that retaining wall work on the ground and some magic box work have already been completed. "The remaining work includes installing the magic boxes and constructing ramps, which we are confident of completing within 100 days," the official said.

Project in a nutshell

In 2014, the erstwhile Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) announced the redevelopment of the 16.5-km stretch of the HAL Airport Road, between ASC Junction and Hope Farm Junction, at a cost of ₹135.25 crore.

As part of the plan, the road was to be made signal-free, which required underpasses at Kundalahalli Junction, Suranjan Das Junction, and Wind Tunnel Junction. After repeated deadline extensions for the Kundalahalli and Suranjan Das underpasses, the civic body opened them in 2022 and 2023, respectively. The Wind Tunnel Junction underpass remains the last-pending component.

In fact, over the past two years, officials of the BBMP and later the Greater Bengaluru Authority wrote six times to the BTP seeking clearance to start the work, but the requests were rejected.

The primary reason cited was the critical role the stretch plays in Bengaluru's road network, particularly as it connects to the city's tech hub. Closing it even partially means paralysing east Bengaluru's traffic.

From Page One

Hippo 'Hamsini' that attacked vet is in critical condition

Sameeksha Reddy, a native of Bengaluru, died the next day in a private hospital in Shivamogga. The death of the young veterinarian raised questions about the safety of the staff, prompting the Forest Minister to order a probe into the incident.

In critical state

Meanwhile, the animal continued to show no interest in having food, leaving the staff worried. The Executive Director consulted the senior officers of the Karnataka Zoo Authority and took the services of wildlife veterinarians from Bannerghatta and Mysuru.

The female hippopotamus had attacked a veterinarian last month. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"Doctors examined the health condition of the hippo on April 10 and collected fluid and blood samples for further tests. The animal was under sedation for a brief period, and the doctors examined whatever they could within that time. Based on the laboratory tests of samples, the veterinarians are suggesting that the animal is in a critical state due to infection caused by the intrauterine foetal death," said the officer.

At present, the Zoo Authority has deputed V.M. Anand, a wildlife veterinarian from Bannerghatta, to Shivamogga Zoo to look after the hippopotamus. He would be stationed here for some time. However, once he returned to his place, there would be no veterinarians at the zoo.

Dr. Murali Manohar, who had worked at the zoo for three years, was relieved from duty on April 8. He had submitted his resignation earlier in November 2025. "He had the notice period until April 30. However, at his request, he has been relieved, and fresh notification to recruit veterinarians has been issued," said Mr. Amarakshara.

Meanwhile Marin Mariya Neel, another veterinarian who had joined the apprenticeship programme along with Sameeksha Reddy, has refused to return to duty.

Following the tragic death of her friend and colleague, Ms. Marin Mariya Neel had applied for leave and later conveyed to the administration that she would not return. It is said that she was disappointed with no measures to enhance the facilities and safety at the zoo.

Asha Bhosle's stint with Sandalwood

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Legendary playback singer Asha Bhosle, who passed away at 92 on Sunday (April 12, 2026), had a brief stint with the Kannada film industry. The singer, whose career spanned over eight decades, sang just three songs in Sandalwood.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy and other prominent leaders of the State condoled her death on Sunday.

"Her melodious voice, grace, and warmth made her an enduring presence in the hearts of millions. Her demise marks the loss of a vital bridge between generations of music," the Chief Minister said. "Her unparalleled contribution to the world of music, marked by timeless melodies and extraordinary versatility, will continue to inspire artists and audiences alike," Mr. Kumaraswamy said.

Bhosle's first Kannada song came in *Kranthiveera Sangolli Rayanna*. The 1967 historical saw all three Mangeshkar sisters- Lata, Asha, and Usha- sing for a Kannada film album. While Lata Mangeshkar sang '*Bellane Belagayitu*', Asha rendered '*Yako yeno seraga nillavaldu*', a song with Maharashtrian lavani overtone.

Asha Bhosle

"These songs reminded you of tunes from popular Hindi songs," notes film historian K. Puttaswamy, indicating the major influence of the Hindi film industry on the compositions. Usha Mangeshkar sang the song '*Yaariva Nan Mana Marulaagisidava*'.

The songs of *Karanthiveera Sangolli Rayanna* were composed by renowned Marathi music director Lakshman Beralekar. Bhosle's second Kannada song also had a Marathi connect.

She sang for the 1973 movie *Doorada Betta*. The Dr. Rajkumar starrer was loosely based on the Marathi movie *Sadhi Mansa* (1965). Bhosle's rendering of '*Savaalu Haaki Solisi Ellara*' was a folk number. "The song had the influence of Tamasha, a traditional form of Marathi theatre," noted Mr. Puttaswamy.

Composed by G.K. Venkatesh, Bhosle sang the song with P.B. Srinivas and Mothi.

Her other Kannada song came nearly four decades later in *Mathe Mungaru* (2010). '*Helade Kaarana*', a melancholic song, was sung by Bhosle and composed by X. Paulraj. During the movie's pre-release stage, the legendary singer had expressed her wish to sing more Kannada songs.

Colourful

Procession of deities: Devotees gather to witness decorated chariots lined up during the Poo Pallakki procession at Halasuru in Bengaluru on Sunday. ALLEN EGENUSE J.

Load testing at Peenya flyover postponed

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has postponed the final load testing of the Peenya Elevated Flyover on National Highway-4, which was scheduled between April 13-17.

The flyover had recently undergone cable repair works. As part of the post-repair process, the NHAI had planned to conduct a final load test to assess the structure's integrity and safety. To facilitate testing, authorities had proposed restricting all types of vehicular movement on the stretch from 5 a.m. on April 13 to 11 a.m. on April 17.

An official told *The Hindu*, however, following a request from the Bengaluru Traffic Police citing unavoidable reasons, the testing exercise has now been deferred.

With the postponement, the flyover will remain open for vehicular movement as usual during the previously notified period.

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, APR. 13	
RISE 06:08	SET 18:32
RISE 02:56	SET 14:52
TUESDAY, APR. 14	
RISE 06:08	SET 18:32
RISE 03:36	SET 15:44
WEDNESDAY, APR. 15	
RISE 06:07	SET 18:32
RISE 04:15	SET 16:36

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	34	15
Mysuru	36	20
Bengaluru	34	24

Bengaluru Today
35°C The weather will be dry. Day will be warm with uneasy afternoon. Night will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
36°C Morning will be pleasant. Day will be very warm and uneasy. Night also will be pleasant. Dry weather to occur.

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THE HINDU
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65-year-old farmer dies in jumbo attack in Hassan dist.; local residents stage protest

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

A 65-year-old farmer was killed in a wild elephant attack at Kannaguppe village in Belur taluk of Hassan district, on Sunday morning. The incident triggered protest by the local people who demanded total relocation of all elephants roaming in the area.

Raja Shetti was on the way to his farm when he encountered the tusker. He died on the spot. The local people who saw the body informed the police and forest officials.

Similar tusker attack

Raja Shetti is survived by wife and three sons. Earlier, in February 2025, Dyamavva, 74, was killed in a similar elephant attack in Kanaguppe. Following the incident, local people staged a protest. They wanted Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre visit the village and promise them a permanent solution to the human-elephant conflict.

MLA for Belur H.K. Suresh, Deputy Commissioner K.S. Latha Kumari, Superintendent of Police Shubhanwita, Deputy Conservator of Forests Sourabh Kumar and others visited the village and conveyed their condolences for the loss of life.

The officers assured the villagers that an operation to capture the tusker, responsible for the man's death, would be launched immediately. A cheque for ₹20 lakh was handed over to the family of the deceased. Mr. Sourabh Kumar told *The Hindu* that the incident occurred early in the morning on Sunday. "Our staff had spotted the movement of the tusker in the village on Saturday and also issued an alert in the village. The incident happened on Sunday, before our staff could track the animal and issue an alert to the villagers," he said.

The Forest Department had decided to capture the tusker. Arrangements were being made to bring trained elephants to assist the operation.

"The trained elephants will reach the spot on Monday, and we will start the operation by Tuesday. As of now, we will capture the tusker and we are also planning to radio-collar two more elephants," the officer added.

Shakti scheme: Four conductors suspended by BMTC for misusing UPI ticketing system

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) has suspended four conductors for allegedly misusing the UPI scanner-linked ticketing system and engaging in fraudulent practices under the State government's Shakti scheme.

The action follows an internal inquiry that revealed the diversion of passenger fares into personal accounts. This is not the first such case. Earlier, in January 2026, the BMTC suspended three conductors for misusing the UPI-linked ticketing system.

According to the BMTC sources, while crores of women across Karnataka continue to benefit from the State government's flagship Shakti scheme, which provides free bus travel for women, certain staff members have exploited the scheme. "Conductors were found issuing zero-value Shakti tickets meant exclusively for women to male passengers, particularly those who could not read Kannada, and collecting fares from them illegally," sources said.

Officials say that in several instances, conductors allegedly removed the official QR codes once buses left the depot, making it easier to carry out the fraud and go undetected. K. MURALI KUMAR

The investigation found that lakhs of rupees that should have gone to BMTC were diverted into personal accounts

To facilitate seamless payments, BMTC had introduced UPI QR codes for ticketing. However, instead of directing passengers to scan the official BMTC QR codes, some conductors allegedly displayed their personal UPI QR codes and pocketed the money. In several instances, they reportedly removed the official QR codes once buses left the depot, making it easier to carry out the fraud and go undetected, said officials.

The investigation found that lakhs of rupees that should have gone to BMTC were diverted into personal accounts. The four suspended conductors collected varying amounts, including ₹54,290, ₹16,404, ₹9,795, and ₹6,117, according to officials.

Officials said the Shakti scheme tickets clearly mention "free travel" only in Kannada, which enabled conductors to mislead non-Kannada-speaking passengers. The fraud came to light following complaints, prompting BMTC security teams to conduct inspections.

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CACHE

AFP

Inside the world of shadow libraries: digital piracy, AI, and the fight for access

Preservation and sharing of knowledge online is a common goal for several academics, activists, pirates, hackers, and technologists; what was once an underground movement for access is now entangled in a larger fight involving publishers, governments, and artificial intelligence companies

Sahana Venugopal

In early 2026, users of Anna's Archive – one of the world's largest shadow libraries – woke up to find that the site's domain had vanished. Within weeks, its alternative address was also taken down. For many students, researchers, and casual readers, it was a familiar disruption. For the organisations behind such platforms, it was business as usual.

Shadow libraries, or vast and often anonymous databases offering free access to books and academic papers, have long existed in a legal grey zone. For years, they were framed as a quiet rebellion: readers bypassing paywalls, students downloading unaffordable textbooks, teachers sharing educational materials, and knowledge circulating beyond borders.

In 2026, they are something else entirely. What was once an underground movement for access is now entangled in a much larger fight involving publishers, governments, and increasingly, artificial intelligence (AI) companies.

Platforms such as Library Genesis (LibGen), Z-Library, Sci-Hub, and Anna's Archive collectively host or index tens of millions of books and research papers. Some operate as searchable indexes linking to files hosted elsewhere while others directly store massive collections.

The appeal of shadow libraries lies in access. In countries where books are expensive, libraries underfunded, or academic journals locked behind steep paywalls, shadow libraries fill a gap that formal systems have failed to address.

Messages left by users on these unauthorised platforms reflect this reality. A homemaker in Kenya described using Z-Library to build new skills while raising children. A reader in Lebanon said war and economic instability had made books unaffordable. A student in India credited the platform with making essential course material accessible.

While publishers and international authorities continue to fight back, digital piracy has proven far harder to contain than its physical counterpart. Websites go offline and reappear under new domains. Mirrors proliferate. Communities migrate across platforms. The infrastructure is decentralised, resilient, and often anonymous. Takedowns, while disruptive, rarely deliver lasting results.

The stakes change

In late 2025, Anna's Archive drew global headlines after claiming it had scraped Spotify, collecting hundreds of terabytes of music and metadata. The move pushed shadow libraries beyond books and research into the realm of multimedia aggregation.

The legal response was swift. In January, a U.S. court ordered service providers linked to Anna's Archive to disable access. Soon after, major publishers filed a lawsuit accusing the platform of operating as a commercial piracy hub.

Another case added a new dimension. A group of authors alleged that Nvidia had used shadow library sources, including Anna's Archive, to obtain copyrighted works for training artificial intelligence models. Nvidia denied the claim.

Regardless of the outcome, the implication is significant as shadow libraries are becoming potential data pipelines for AI systems.

This shift has unsettled even some supporters of the Open Access movement. While many users justify piracy as a response to high prices and restricted access, the idea of large technology companies benefiting from the same datasets introduces a new ethical concern.

Such concerns are enabling new open access systems that expand access to knowledge through legal channels.

"What distinguishes India is the continued and significant role of public-sector-led Diamond Open Access, where neither authors nor readers pay, supported by publicly funded research organisations," said Sridhar Gutam, the convenor of Open Access India.

Platforms such as preprint repositories and community-led journals aim to make research widely available without violating copyright laws.

"Open Access India has also been instrumental in launching and supporting no-fee scholarly infrastructures... These initiatives reflect a long-standing commitment to non-commercial, community-governed publishing models," he added.

Mr. Gutam argued that shadow libraries are not a solution, but a symptom.

"The widespread use of shadow libraries reflects persistent access barriers, particularly in low- and middle-income contexts. While such platforms raise clear legal and ethical concerns and cannot be endorsed, focusing solely on enforcement without addressing the underlying access crisis would be insufficient," he said.

Even within the shadow library ecosystem, there is no unified philosophy.

Anna's Archive has positioned itself as a preservation-focused project, aiming to index and safeguard existing collections. It has previously criticised platforms like Z-Library for restricting access to newly uploaded content, arguing that true openness requires easier sharing and mirroring.

At the same time, Anna's Archive has faced criticism of its own, particularly for offering high-level data access in exchange for large donations or contributions. The possibility of providing datasets to corporations, including AI developers, has divided its user base.

Sci-Hub, one of the most well-known platforms focused on academic papers, has also distanced itself from newer entrants. Its founder, Alexandra Elbakyan, has argued that no other piracy platform matches its impact on access to scientific knowledge.

These disagreements highlight a key point: shadow libraries are not a single movement, but a loose network of projects with overlapping goals and conflicting values.

A widening conflict

The debate over shadow libraries is often framed as a clash between readers and publishers. That framing no longer captures the full picture.

Today, the conflict spans industries and borders. Courts in multiple countries are becoming arenas where these battles play out.

For publishers, the stakes include revenue, intellectual property, brand reputation, and the sustainability of creative industries. For technology companies, the issue is access to vast datasets that can power increasingly sophisticated AI systems. For users, the concerns remain more immediate: affordability, availability, and the freedom to read. These interests do not align neatly.

As legal battles intensify and new actors enter the space, the future of the shadow libraries remains uncertain.

THE DAILY QUIZ

A quiz on the legendary singer Asha Bhosle who passed away on Sunday

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

V.V. Ramanan

QUESTION #1

Because of personal reasons, Asha started playback singing at the age of 10. What was her first Hindi song recorded for 'Chunariya' in 1948?

QUESTION #2

Name the music director who helped Asha build a distinct identity because of his reluctance to work with her sister Lata in the 1950s and 1960s?

QUESTION #3

In 2011, Asha was acknowledged by Guinness World Records as the most recorded artist in music history with how many songs in more than how many languages?

QUESTION #4

In 1997, Asha became the first Indian singer to get a Grammy nomination for 'Legacy - 16th-18th Century Music from India', a collaborative classical album recorded with which famous Sarod great?

QUESTION #5

Name the two Asha songs sampled by Black Eyed Peas for their 2005 hit "Don't Phunk With My Heart".

QUESTION #6

She debuted as a lead actress in 2013 at the age of 79 for a Marathi film. Name the flick.

QUESTION #7

For singing in which Rekha-starrer did Asha win her maiden National film award and in which year did she get the Dadasaheb Phalke Award?

Visual Question:
Name the song that Asha and the ace Australian cricketer Brett Lee crooned together. FILE PHOTO

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. What was Rahul Sankrityayan's birth name? **Ans: Kedarnath Pandey**
2. Which celebrated work of historical fiction by Rahul Sankrityayan traces the evolution of human society through stories spanning thousands of years? **Ans: Volga Se Ganga (From Volga to Ganga)**
3. Which Rahul Sankrityayan's works won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1958? **Ans: Madhya Asia ka Itihas (History of Central Asia)**
4. Which 1934 work of Sankrityayan's introduces readers to Marxist historical interpretation? **Ans: Samyavad Hi Kyon (Why Socialism?)**
5. Rahul Sankrityayan spent time teaching Sanskrit at which major foreign academic institution? **Ans: Leningrad State University in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.**
Visual: This photograph of Rahul Sankrityayan in handcuffs was taken after his arrest during which peasant movement in Bihar? **Ans: The Amwari Kisan Satyagraha of 1939, associated with the peasant mobilisation of the All India Kisan Sabha**
Early Birds: K.N. Viswanathan | Sukdev Shet | Neil Lall | Suman Aditi | Varghese Joseph

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

Many fans chose to vote with their feet

The cute baby tried to hold the new toy in its pudgy little hand

S. Upendran

What is the meaning of the expression 'voting with the feet'? (D. Rajeswari, Chennai)
When a shop decides to increase the price of all its products for no reason at all, what is the normal reaction of the people who frequent the place? Some band together and organise a protest, hoping that the management will come to its senses, and lower the prices. Others, simply choose to walk out; they show their displeasure by taking their business elsewhere. They actively look for and find new places to buy their daily needs; they do the disappearing act. This manner of expressing one's anger or dissatisfaction by choosing to walk out of a situation is usually referred to as 'vote with the feet'.

When the Board decided to hike the price of tickets, many fans chose to vote with their feet, and stopped going to matches.

What is the meaning of 'pudgy'? How is the word pronounced? (S. Alok, Kolkata)
The word consists of two syllables; the first rhymes with 'fudge', 'budge' and 'nudge'. The final 'y' sounds like the 'i' in 'bit', 'kit' and 'sit'. The word, which is mostly used in informal contexts, is pronounced 'PUDJ-i', with the stress on the first syllable. According to scholars, the word comes from the English 'pudsy' meaning 'fat and thick'.

Today, it is very common to hear people referring to a child as being ''pudgy' - meaning the child is a little overweight. He is not fat; and though overweight, he is rather cute to look at - as chubby kids, usually, are. 'Pudgy' can also be used to describe an individual's - both an adult's and a child's - fingers, etc. When you say that someone's fingers are 'pudgy', what you are suggesting is that the person has short, thick fingers. The very opposite of how most people would like their fingers to be - long and slender.

The cute baby tried to hold the new toy in its pudgy little hand.

Jack became very jealous when he saw Jyothi sitting next to the pudgy man.

Is there a difference between 'enough money' and 'money enough'? (P. Deepa, Hyderabad)
Some people believe that 'money enough' is ungrammatical; this however, is not true. Of the two, 'enough money' is heard much more frequently in everyday contexts. 'Money enough' is considered literary, and therefore, not used as frequently as 'enough money'. In terms of meaning, most books claim there is not much of a difference between the two. Careful users of the language maintain there is a subtle distinction between the two. When you say that you have 'enough money' to buy a car, what you are suggesting is that you have sufficient money to buy the car. If you say that you have 'money enough' to buy a car, you are implying you have more than enough money. In other words, you will have money left after buying the car.

We have enough money to get from here to Chennai.

We have money enough to buy everyone what they want.

Word of the day

Innocuous:
not injurious to physical or mental health

Synonyms: unobjectionable, innocent, harmless

Usage: *An innocuous present would be a gift basket of fruit and snacks.*

Pronunciation: /ɪˈnɒkjʊəs/

International Phonetic Alphabet: newsth.live/innocuous

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

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Rain eases Bandipur fire threat, but risk persists in other habitats

R. Krishna Kumar
MYSURU

Pre-monsoon rain in parts of south Karnataka have provided temporary reprieve from the threat of forest fires to critical wildlife habitats like Bandipur and Nagarahole. However, the hazard is far from over in the adjoining landscape, including BRT Tiger Reserve, M.M. Hills and Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary.

While the recent showers have offered a glimmer of hope that the 2026 forest fire season may not see a repeat of earlier devastations, especially in Bandipur, the authorities are on high alert elsewhere where rainfall has been inadequate.

Sporadic incidents

BRT Tiger reserve in Chamarajanagar district has been witnessing sporadic incidents of fire this year given scanty rain in the region. But heavy showers benefited Bandipur, a vast portion of which is in the same district.

Between March 1 and April 7, Gundlupet taluk, where the core area of Bandipur is situated, received 60 mm of rainfall, which is 120% above the seasonal normal. However, rainfall was not uniform across the region. Parts of the tiger reserve straddle Nanjangud and H.D. Kote taluks of Mysuru district, where the rainfall was more sporadic, leaving certain ranges dry and vulnerable to fire outbreak. "Almost 70% of Bandipur received showers recently. It has diminished the threat of a major forest fire considerably," said Prabhakaran, deputy conservator of forests, Bandipur Tiger Reserve.

The focus has shifted to the more vulnerable areas in Bandipur, which was devastated by a catastrophic fire in 2019 that decimated thousands of acres of forest. FILE PHOTO

Additional watchers

To address the fire threat, authorities had deployed 475 additional watchers, mainly drawn from the local tribal population. But consequent to the rains, their deployment has been withdrawn for the current season, underlining the confidence among the authorities that the threat of a forest fire has abated.

However, they have not let down their guard. The focus has shifted to the more vulnerable areas in Bandipur, which was devastated by a catastrophic fire in 2019 that decimated thousands of acres of forest.

In recent years, the focus is also on managing the fuel build-up by way of clearing *Lantana camara*, a weed which is combustible when dry, and has covered over 60% of Bandipur, which is spread over 1,456.3 sq. km, with a core of 872.24 sq. km.

The removal of *Lantana* in some of the fire-prone zones has made the undergrowth more manageable, according to the authorities.

Thermal monitoring

Drones with thermal cameras are monitoring private plantations outside forest borders, where fires are often set deliberately to clear the land. This poses a risk of the fire spreading to the tiger reserve. Hence, the Forest Department steps in to douse the flames as a precautionary measure, according to Mr. Prabhakaran.

In the Nagarahole forest, which was scarred by major fires in 2012 and 2014, the scenario is a mix of relief and concern.

While the rain did provide adequate moisture to douse the threat of fire over a large swathe of the tiger reserve, there are ranges in Hunsur-H.D. Kote belt where the forest is dry and susceptible to fire.

While the current moisture levels offer a temporary reprieve, the state of alert will not be lowered until the onset of the south-west monsoon in June, according to the authorities.

Siddaramaiah's political secretary 'asked' to go

The development comes a day after KPCC Minority Cell chairman Abdul Jabbar tendered his resignation after apparently being asked to do so by the Congress central leadership

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU / SHIVAMOGGA

The fallout over the alleged anti-party activities by some Muslim leaders of Congress in the Davangere South Assembly seat that went to bypolls on April 9, is beginning to surface.

A day after Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) Minority Cell chairman Abdul Jabbar tendered his resignation after apparently being asked to do so by the party central leadership, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's political secretary Naseer Ahmed is learnt to have been asked to step down.

The two Muslim leaders, along with Housing Minister B.Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan – who had lobbied strongly for a Muslim candidate in Davangere South – are being accused of not taking part in the election campaign, threatening the outcome for the Congress' official nominee, Samarth Mallikarjun.

Naseer Ahmed

Mr. Jabbar was an aspirant for the Congress ticket in Davangere and was in the eye of the storm over his conduct in the run-up to the polls. Chief Minister's Office (CMO) sources said no immediate action was likely against Mr. Khan.

On Sunday, Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar announced that he had accepted the resignation of Mr. Jabbar. He also announced that the Minority Cell committee formed under Mr. Jabbar's leadership had been dissolved. The KPCC president further stated that steps would be taken to constitute a new committee.

Meanwhile, Mr. Siddaramaiah had told reporters in N.R. Pura that his political secretary may tender his resignation for his post in the wake of reports of anti-party activities during the byelection.

Interacting with presspersons at N.R. Pura in Chikkamagaluru district, on Sunday, Mr. Siddaramaiah said that there were reports of anti-party activities by some leaders in Davangere South constituency. A report had been submitted by AICC representatives on the development in the party. Based on their reports, action was being taken, he said.

Asked if Mr. Naseer had also resigned, Mr. Siddaramaiah said: "He has not resigned yet. I hope he may resign."

He further asserted that despite anti-party activities by some people, the party candidate would win the seat.

The developments follow allegations over certain minority leaders hatching a conspiracy to defeat Mr. Samarth.

Saleem Ahmed, MLC, and Rizwan Arshad, MLA, had alleged that there was a conspiracy by a section of minority leaders to ensure the defeat of the Congress candidate.

Sources said that Mr. Jabbar, along with Mr. Khan and Mr. Naseer were found wanting in the election campaign in Davangere South, where Muslim voters are believed to be present in large numbers.

Sources also said that there were efforts to help the SDPI candidate to ensure the defeat of the Congress candidate. The three leaders had made candidate selection difficult for the party. Though internally the candidate selection had been agreed, they held a different posture publicly, sources said, adding that the rebel candidate in the fray, who withdrew after the Chief Minister's intervention, had entered the election arena at their behest.

Second political secretary to face action

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's political secretary, Naseer Ahmed, will be the second political secretary to step down upon his resignation.

Last year, another political secretary, K. Govindaraj, was sacked following the stampede at M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, in which 11 persons died.

Mr. Naseer and Abdul Jabbar – both MLCs – were seen as part of the Chief Minister's camp. While those close to the Chief Minister are playing down the exits, the developments are being viewed as a jolt to the camp.

K.N. Rajanna was sacked last year over his comments on alleged vote theft in Mahadevapura, that contradicted the party's stand. CMO sources justified that action had to be taken when there was a mistake. "The Chief Minister's camp still has many leaders. These exits have no impact," sources said. Currently, the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister are seen at loggerheads over the leadership position.

CORRIDORS OF POWER

Yatnal's counsel on good conduct

Expelled BJP leader and senior MLA Basanagouda R. Patil Yatnal *(pictured)*, during a roadshow ahead of the recently held bypolls in Bagalkot, decided to strike a candid exchange with the crowd.

"Everyone knows that BJP nominee Viranna Charantimath keeps his distance from people. He mostly remains silent, does not smile, and rarely greets anyone. Do you agree?" he asked, drawing a loud "Yes" from those present. He then said he was trying to change that perception. "I have told him to greet people warmly and smile openly. When people come with grievances, he should ask them to sit and offer tea or coffee. That alone will make them happy. They may even forget their complaints and leave feeling valued. They will share that experience with others. That is how popularity is built, not with a stern face," he said. Incidentally, despite being expelled from the party, Mr. Yatnal campaigned for Mr. Charantimath.

KSCA chief earns applause

Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) president Venkatesh Prasad deserves credit for the successful hosting of IPL 2026 matches at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru, while also upholding the tradition of staging the tournament's opening ceremony at the home ground of the defending champions. Despite Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) lifting the trophy last year, uncertainty loomed over the venue for this season's curtain-raiser following the tragic stampede outside the stadium in June that claimed 11 lives during the victory celebrations. The former cricketer worked tirelessly and held a series of meetings with senior government officials and his KSCA colleagues to ensure the matches went ahead. The prospect of losing the games threatened to dent the city's image. Mr. Prasad's successful negotiations with the State government and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) earned him widespread appreciation, including recognition from a university that conferred an honorary doctorate on him.

Two missing zeroes

Ankit Bhimappa Karatagi, a student of Morarji Desai Science Pre-University Residential College, Nidasosi, Hukkeri Taluk, Belagavi district, emerged as the proud second topper in the Science stream, securing 99.67% marks in the II PU results announced last week. H.C. Mahadevappa had called a press meet at his official residence to share this news with pride, but a goof-up by those responsible for arranging the event left the department embarrassed. A prominently placed flex banner at the venue, which carried Ankit's picture with the marks he had obtained in various subjects, said he had scored "1" in Physics. Two zeroes had gone missing due to a printing error. When a few journalists pointed it out, a marker was fetched, and an official wrote two zeros next to "1". When the matter was brought to the attention of the Minister, he laughed.

Rishikesh Bahadur Desai
Nagesh Prabhu
Jayanth R.

Over 30 Congress MLAs head to Delhi

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Amid speculations over a leadership change in the State, a set of Congress legislators left for Delhi on Sunday to mount pressure on the party high command to initiate a Cabinet reshuffle and accommodate new faces.

The legislators may meet Central leaders, including Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal and general secretary in charge of Karnataka Randeep Surjewala over the next two days.

Resignations

While Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's camp is pushing for a cabinet reshuffle, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, who is eyeing the Chief Minister's post, is opposed to the reshuffle. Currently, two Cabinet berths are vacant due to the resignation of K.N. Rajanna and B. Nagendra.

According to former minister and Cabinet hopeful Puttaranga Shetty, about 32 legislators, including some first-time legislators, are part of the group that is seeking a Cabinet reshuffle.

Legislator Belur Gopalkrishna told presspersons at Kempegowda International Airport that the trip to Delhi had been planned earlier but had been put off due to elections in five States. The government is nearing three years in office, it should ideally go for a Cabinet reshuffle, he said. Ashok Pattan, MLA, seen in the Chief Minister's camp, said that with just about two years left, it was time for a Cabinet reshuffle. If the same set of people become Ministers every time, then what happens to other legislators, he asked. "We are going under collective leadership to impress upon the high command for a Cabinet reshuffle," he said.

Another legislator, D.G. Shantanagouda, said new faces need to be inducted, and that they have sought time from leaders for a meet over the next two days.

'No objections'

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister told presspersons in N.R. Pura that he had no objections to MLAs visiting Delhi. "The Cabinet reshuffle has been due since the government completed two-and-half years after coming to power. Because of the elections in five States and the State Budget, the reshuffle has been delayed," he stated.

Four arrested for abduction; victim rescued

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

The Udupi police have arrested four persons for abducting a man and rescued the victim, identified as Rajesh, 39, a resident of Kundapur taluk. He had been kept in a lodge in Jagtial district, Telangana.

The police said eight persons had a financial dispute with Mr. Rajesh. On the night of March 31, while he was drinking coffee at a stall near Manipal KMC Hospital, a group arrived in a car. They caught Mr. Rajesh, put him in the car. His brother lodged a complaint with the Manipal police. A police team traced the accused to a lodge in Karimnagar. They made the arrests and rescued Mr. Rajesh. The search is on for the other accused.

Assumes charge as SWR GM

HUBBALLI: P. Ananth, an officer of the 1989 batch of the Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineers (IRSME), has assumed charge as the new General Manager of South Western Railway.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

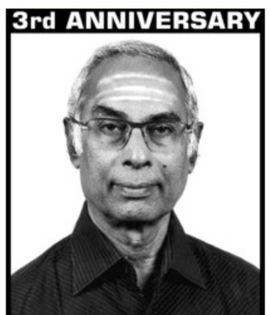
8th ANNIVERSARY on 13-04-2026

ஒழுக்கம், பக்தி இருகண்கள் என்று
82 ஆண்டுகள் புவியில் வாழ்ந்தாய்.
ஐம்பத்தாறு ஆண்டுகள் என் வாழ்க்கைத்
துணை நலமாக இருந்து என் உயிரில்
கலந்தாய். என்னை இயக்குகிறாய்.

Mrs.O.R. NIRMALA, B.A.,
(Retd.) Controller, Office of the J.C.C. Of Imports & Exports, Chennai
10.04.1936 FRIDAY — 13.04.2018 FRIDAY
Fondly Remembered by
Husband: V.RAJAMANOHARAN, M.A. (Retd) Deputy Director (I & PR), Chennai-9)
Son: V.R. Murugavel, B.E.
Daughter: S.Thamizh Selvi, B.Sc
Daughter-in-law: Sharmila M.R.SC
Son-in-law: M.Sundar Rajan, M.Tech
Grand Children: Selvi.M, Prarthana, M.Vijaya Prathan, S.Sai Krishna
Mobile: 94449 51564

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

3rd ANNIVERSARY



K. JAGANNATHAN
S/o P. KUMARAGURUBARAN

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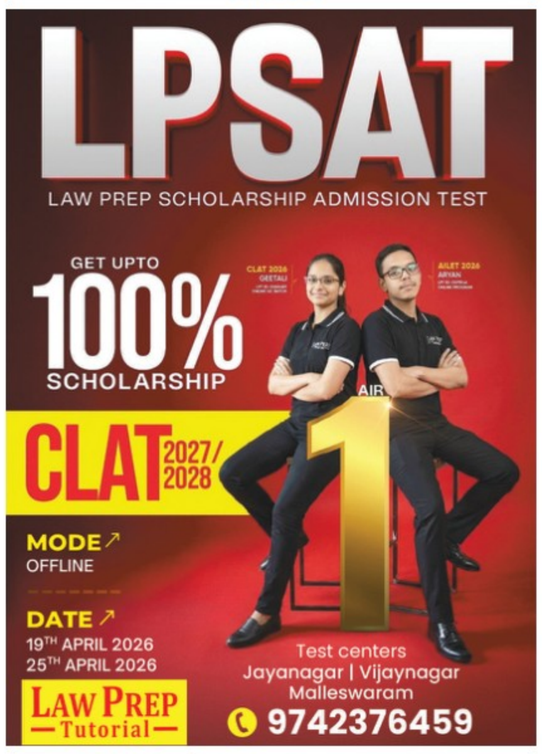
PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME

I, **MAHAVEER** Prasad, residing at No.15/16, 17th Main, Machohalli Gate, Bengaluru – 560091, have changed my minor son's name from Hitesh Prasad Darji to Jayansh Prasad Darji, aged 11 years, vide notarised affidavit dated 03–04–2026.

EDUCATIONAL
GENERAL



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(CIN : U40109KA1999SGC025521)

No. CGM(Tech)/DGM(APCC&PROC)/EE-4/AEE5/2025-26/209-237 Date: 10.04.2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(THROUGH KARNATAKA PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PORTAL ONLY)

KPTCL invites bids on electronic mode for the following works against following Enquiry Number:

Enquiry No.& Name of the work:

KPTCL/2026-27/SS/WORK_INDENT3608

Combined package for the following works:

Work-A: 1) Providing additional 1x500MVA, 400/220/33kV Transformer in existing 400/220kV **Guttur** sub-station at Guttur Village, Harihara Taluk, Davanagere District. **2)** Construction of 220kV SC line on DC tower at 400/220kV **Guttur** for a distance of 0.120Kms using Drake conductor on DC tower in Harihara Taluk, Davanagere District. **3)** Renovation & Modernization of existing 400/220kV **Guttur** sub-station in Harihara Taluk, Davanagere District.

Work-B: For providing spare 1x500MVA, 400/220/33kV Interconnecting Transformer at 400kV **Doni** sub-station in Mundargi Taluk, Gadag District.

Work-C: Providing additional 1x500MVA, 400/220kV/33kV ICT at GIS/AIS 400/220kV Hiremallanahole **(Jagaluru)** sub-station in Jagaluru Taluk, Davanagere District.

Work-D: Providing additional 3rd **1x500MVA**, 400/220kV/33kV ICT and additional **1x125MVAr Bus reactor** at **400/220kV Firozabad** sub-station in Kalaburgi Taluk & District.

Work-E: Providing 1 x125MVAr, 400kV Bus Reactor at Proposed 400/220kV GIS sub-station Dommasandra in Bengaluru East Taluk, Bengaluru Urban District.

on Total Turnkey basis including Supply of all Materials/ equipments, Mandatory Spares, Erection (including dismantling and Civil Works) of all materials/equipments, Testing and Commissioning".

The details regarding participation in the E-tendering process can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL website https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in with hyperlink "E Procurement KPTCL" or https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in on or after **18.04.2026.** Last date & time for receipt of Bids is **07.05.2026 @ 15:00hrs.**

Any extension of due date for Bid submission will be intimated in the Karnataka Public Procurement portal. Any details required in this regard can also be had from the Office of the undersigned during Office hours.

All Corrigendum/Addendums shall be noticed by the bidders before the last date of submission of the bids.

Sd/- Chief General Manager(Tech)., Corporate Office, KPTCL, 11th Floor, Indhana Bhavan, Ananda Rao Circle, Bengaluru - 560 009.

Student's death raises concern over 'caste bias' in Kerala colleges

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The dental college has suspended two faculty members in connection with Nithin Raj's death

The suspected campus suicide of R.L. Nithin Raj, a first-year student at the Anjarakandy Dental College in Kannur district of Kerala, on Friday, has caused a public outcry and raised questions about casteism on higher education campuses, despite constitutional safeguards against social discrimination.

Nithin Raj's body was brought to his rented house at Uzhamalackal in Thiruvananthapuram early on Sunday.

An audio clip suspected to be of the student narrating the humiliation he allegedly faced from some faculty members and classmates surfaced on media. The State Police are examining the veracity of the voice message. According to the police, Nithin Raj had died after a fall from the college's third floor.

Meanwhile, the dental college authorities have suspended two faculty members, M.K. Ram and K.T. Sangeetha Nambiar, pending inquiry in connection with Nithin Raj's death.

A large crowd had gathered to say farewell to Nithin Raj, whose father works as a handyman and part-time painter. Communist Party of India (Marxist) district secretary for Thiruvananthapuram, A.A. Rahim, MP, who called on the bereaved family, told press-persons that Nithin Raj had faced discrimination in the college because he was from a Dalit family. "The CPI(M) demands a comprehensive inquiry," he said.

All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary K.C. Venugopal said Nithin Raj's parents have testified to the ordeal their ward endured at the college. "The Congress demands a foolproof inquiry," he said.

Nithin Raj's teachers and classmates remembered him as a brilliant student with excellent handwriting.

Audio message

In the audio message, the speaker alleges that a teacher insulted him in the staff room, used abusive language, mocked his mother and issued threats. He also recounts repeated humiliation in class, including public ridicule and marking penalties.

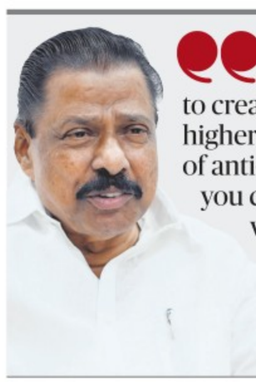
The police have already recorded the statements of the victim's relatives and those who took him to the hospital. A detailed statement from his parents and relatives will be taken later. The police said they would also check the phone recordings to analyse the cause of death. "It [audio clip] has to be verified and the source identified," a senior investigating police officer told *The Hindu*.

(Those in distress can contact TeleMANAS at 14416 to seek help)

LDF will win over 90 seats, return to power: Govindan

CPI(M) State secretary rejects speculation that a high polling percentage in the Assembly election might be an indicator of anti-incumbency, as SIR has excluded a considerable number of voters

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



> The UDF, and sections of the media, are attempting to create an impression that a higher polling percentage is proof of anti-incumbency. However, if you compare the voter numbers with previous elections, you will realise this claim is baseless
>
> **M.V. GOVINDAN**
> CPI(M) Kerala secretary

Expressing confidence that the Left Democratic Front (LDF) would come back to power for an unprecedented third term by winning over 90 seats, Communist Party of India (Marxist) State secretary M.V. Govindan said on Sunday that speculation around high polling percentages in the Assembly election was baseless.

Addressing a press conference at the AKG Centre here, he said that the incumbent MLAs of the LDF would emerge victorious as the voters had shown an intense wish for continuity.

Mr. Govindan rejected speculation that a high polling percentage in the election might be an indicator of a change in government.

SIR impact

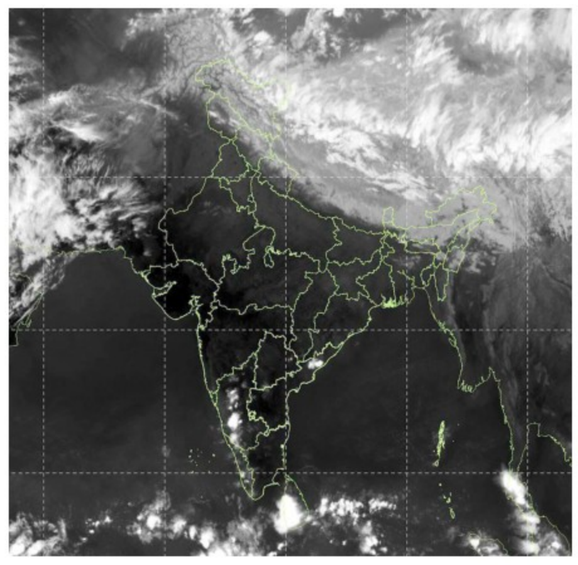
"The United Democratic Front (UDF) as well as sections of the media have been attempting to create an impression that a higher polling percentage is proof of anti-incumbency. However, if you compare the voter numbers with previous elections, you will realise that this claim is baseless. Compared with the 2021 Assembly election, the number of voters has reduced considerably after the special intensive revision (SIR) in 94 constituencies. Out of this reduced number, 78.27% voters cast their votes. The polling was less in 71 constituencies compared with 2021," he said.

He said that it cannot be assumed that there was minority consolidation in the election. "Due to the SIR issues, there was a feeling among the minority communities that they all must cast their vote. We cannot say that this will benefit the UDF," he said.

Mr. Govindan accused the UDF and the BJP of using money and other gifts, including saris, to woo voters, on the lines of the practices in North India. Despite this, the BJP will not win any seats this time too, Mr. Govindan said.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning & gusty winds very likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. Thunderstorm accompanied with Lightning very likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Coastal Karnataka, Kerala and South Interior Karnataka

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	34.7	25.2	Kozhikode	—	36.8	28.4
Ahmedabad	—	40.7	25.7	Kurnool	—	42.1	30.0
Aizawl	—	32.4	18.4	Lucknow	—	36.6	20.0
Allahabad	—	39.8	20.6	Madurai	—	38.4	26.2
Bengaluru	—	34.4	24.0	Mangaluru	—	33.2	26.0
Bhopal	—	38.6	20.4	Mumbai	—	34.2	27.4
Bhubaneswar	—	37.7	26.0	Mysuru	—	36.0	20.4
Chandigarh	—	31.9	14.8	New Delhi	—	34.3	18.7
Chennai	—	36.5	27.3	Patna	—	37.2	23.6
Coimbatore	—	37.2	25.6	Port Blair	—	32.6	25.8
Dehradun	—	29.7	12.8	Puducherry	—	32.7	25.1
Gangtok	—	11.4	10.6	Pune	—	39.8	20.3
Goa	—	33.6	25.2	Raipur	—	41.0	23.1
Guwahati	—	30.6	20.1	Ranchi	—	34.8	18.0
Hubballi	—	00.0	00.0	Shillong	—	00.0	00.0
Hyderabad	—	39.4	27.0	Shimla	—	20.5	9.0
Imphal	—	28.6	15.9	Srinagar	—	20.8	5.5
Jaipur	—	34.7	24.6	Thiruvananthapuram	—	35.2	24.7
Kochi	—	32.6	28.0	Tiruchi	—	37.9	26.6
Kohima	—	17.7	11.4	Vijayawada	—	00.0	00.0
Kolkata	—	35.2	26.2	Visakhapatnam	—	34.1	28.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	--	73	62	184	255	
Bengaluru	4.0	--	38	86	136	
Chennai	2.0	11	--	17	46	
Delhi	33	27	37	117	231	
Hyderabad	15	13	35	58	85	
Kolkata	8.0	88	35	100	102	
Lucknow	12	10	43	165	134	
Mumbai	1.0	50	42	117	167	
Pune	--	35	47	83	117	
Visakhapatnam	40	47	20	55	107	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Mandideep, Madhya Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 272 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Puducherry recorded a healthy AQI score of 28.

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

12 Indian fishermen held by Sri Lankan Navy

The Hindu Bureau
KARAIKAL

A total of 12 fishermen, including five from Tamil Nadu, were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy on Saturday night for allegedly crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL), sources said.

The fishermen had ventured into the sea in a mechanised boat, owned by Veeravel of Tsunami Nagar at Kilinjalmedu in Karaikal district, from the Karaikal fishing harbour around 10 a.m. on April 10. While they were fishing about 60 nautical miles off Karaikal, the boat was intercepted by the Sri Lankan Navy around 9 p.m. on April 11, and all 12 fishermen on board were taken into custody. Among those detained were four fishermen from Mayiladuthurai district, one from Nagapattinam district, and seven from Karaikal district.

Three boys drown while swimming in A.P.

The Hindu Bureau
PADERU

Three boys drowned while swimming in the Matsyagedda river in Alluri Sitharama Raju (ASR) district of Andhra Pradesh on Sunday, police said.

The deceased were identified as Arshit, 11, and Koda Praveen, 10, from G.K. Veedhi, and Pangi Bablu, 10, from Panneda in Pedabayalu mandal. All three were studying at the upper primary level in the Government Tribal Welfare Boys Residential School at Panneda.

Pedabayalu Sub-Inspector T. Venkatesh said a group of five boys had gone to Matsyagedda for swimming. The local people rescued two boys, while Arshit, Bablu and Praveen went missing. Their bodies were later retrieved.

Pedabayalu police has registered a case and an investigation is on.

Cooling off

Soaring temperatures: People relax at the seashore during the weekend to find respite from the scorching heat at Kothapatnam, near Ongole, in Andhra Pradesh on Sunday. Heatwave alerts have been issued in 54 mandals in the State. KOMMURI SRINIVAS

DMK government has ruined Tamil Nadu, says Piyush Goyal

The Hindu Bureau
PUDUKOTTAI

BJP leader and Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal on Sunday accused the ruling DMK government of having "ruined" a wonderful State such as Tamil Nadu.

Allegations

In a brief interaction with journalists at Pudukottai, Mr. Goyal alleged that the DMK government had totally failed and claimed it was a "party of corruption and commission".

"Our sisters and daughters are feeling unsafe because of the bad law and order situation under DMK rule," he said.

According to Mr. Goyal, the youth were suffering from the menace of drugs in Tamil Nadu, where the quality of healthcare was bad, with no infrastructure development taking place.

Piyush Goyal

> Our sisters and daughters are feeling unsafe because of the bad law and order situation under DMK rule
>
> **PIYUSH GOYAL**
> Union Minister of Commerce and Industry

The State government under Chief Minister M.K. Stalin was busy making money all the time, he further alleged.

The people of the State would reject the DMK-Congress combine in the upcoming election and bring back AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami as Chief Minister to provide a "good rule".

All parties in the AIADMK-BJP National Democratic Alliance were working together as one family, Mr. Goyal said.

'Stalin lying about NEP'

Responding to a question, Mr. Goyal said nowhere did the National Education Policy (NEP) mention any particular language.

He accused Mr. Stalin of creating a fake narrative on this issue and wanted him to answer the people of Tamil Nadu as to why he was lying.

The Union Minister wanted to know whether Mr. Stalin would assure the people of Tamil Nadu that he would never make his son and Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin the Chief Minister.

A.P.'s Polavaram hydel project gathers pace with advanced turbine tech

V. Raghavendra
POLAVARAM

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited and Siemens Energy are supplying key equipment

The 960-MW Polavaram Hydroelectric Project (PHEP) is poised to emerge as one of the most significant hydroelectric power assets in India, both in terms of scale and technological advancement, with civil construction and electro-mechanical works progressing at a brisk pace.

Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. (BHEL) and Siemens Energy are supplying key equipment for the project, which comprises 12 units of 80 megawatts each and has gathered momentum.

According to senior officials of APGenco, the massive vertical Kaplan turbines, designed to handle exceptionally high water discharge, set this project apart.

Each unit is engineered to operate at a discharge of 331 cubic metres per second and a rotational speed of 100 revolutions per minute, making them the largest Kaplan turbine units ever installed in the country. This configuration ensures high efficiency, especially under varying water flow conditions typical of river-based hydro projects.

With a levelised tariff of ₹4.57 per unit, PHEP will reduce dependence on power purchases from external sources and help stabilise electricity tariffs.

Siemens Energy is providing advanced gas and air-insulated substation systems, while Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Ltd. is executing the electro-mechanical works.

Telangana's trauma policy targets eight-minute emergency response

Siddharth Kumar Singh
HYDERABAD

With road accidents claiming thousands of lives each year, Telangana is betting on speed as the difference-maker. Its newly unveiled Trauma Care Policy aims to bring down emergency response time to under 8-9 minutes, nearly halving the current 13-to-15-minute window.

The policy lays out a system-wide overhaul of trauma care. It aims to cut down the time by strengthening emergency response systems, mapping accident-prone black spots with inputs from the NHAI and police, and strategically placing trauma centres along high-risk corridors, Director of Medical Education (DME) A. Narendra Kumar said.

State Health Minister C. Damodar Raja Narasimha launches the Trauma Care Policy on World Health Day on April 7. SIDDHANT THAKUR

India recorded 1.73 lakh deaths from road crashes in 2023, with Telangana contributing around 5-7% of these cases.

Mr. Kumar added that a key shift of this policy is to move away from a fragmented system towards a unified trauma care model under the principle of 'One Patient, One System, One Protocol'. The aim is to ensure that trauma victims are stabilised quickly, transported efficiently and treated at the appropriate facility without delays.

To operationalise this vision, the health department will implement a structured four-level trauma care network.

Level Four centres will function as pre-hospital units, including ambulances and mobile emergency services. Level Three centres, located in district hospitals, will handle initial treatment. Level Two centres, typically medical colleges, will provide advanced trauma care. Level One centres will serve as apex institutions, offering comprehensive care for complex trauma cases.

Software engineer from Vizianagaram drowns in U.S. river

The Hindu Bureau
VIZIANAGARAM

Singireddy Sai Krishna, 29, a software engineer from Piridi village in Bobbili of Vizianagaram district, drowned in the Meramec river at Meramec State Park in Sullivan, Missouri in the United States on Saturday. Mr. Sai Krishna entered the water at the campground's boat ramp to swim, began to struggle and went underwater.

The Sullivan Fire Protection District launched a water rescue operation, and fire crews later recovered the body.

Elusive deal

U.S. and Iran must continue diplomatic efforts to end the war

Twenty-one hours of talks in Islamabad between the U.S. and Iran ended without a breakthrough. That no agreement emerged from the first post-ceasefire meeting is not surprising. Nor does it mean that the process has collapsed. Even before the talks began, it was evident that there were huge gaps between the two sides. The two-week ceasefire announced by U.S. President Donald Trump on April 8, after 39 days of war, looked shaky from day one as Israel stepped up air strikes on Lebanon, killing hundreds. Both Iran, and Pakistan, which mediated the truce, claimed that Lebanon was covered by the ceasefire, while Israel wants to continue the war. There was no mutually agreed framework for the Islamabad talks either. Iran claimed that its 10-point proposal was accepted as the basis for discussion, while the White House said that the ten points that it received were different from those in the proposal that Tehran had released. Despite differences, the meeting between U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance and the Iranian delegation headed by Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the first face-to-face senior-level meeting between the two sides since the 1979 revolution, marked significant progress.

According to Mr. Vance and Iranian officials, three issues remain contentious – Iran's nuclear programme, its control over the Strait of Hormuz, and Israeli strikes on Lebanon. Notably, Iran was willing to make a deal on its nuclear programme, the strait was fully open, and the Lebanon situation had not escalated into a full-scale ground invasion before the U.S. and Israel launched the war on Iran on February 28. U.S.-Israeli bombings have not met their stated objectives. On the contrary, the war has hardened Iran's position and triggered a whole new crisis over the Strait of Hormuz. Mr. Trump, who unilaterally sabotaged the Obama-era Iran nuclear deal in 2018, should not have started this war. But now that the war has turned out to be a strategic setback for the U.S. and its regional allies, Washington must focus on a negotiated settlement without ultimatums. Iran, for its part, realises that it holds significant leverage, but it should avoid overplaying its hand. Tehran needs credible security guarantees against future aggression and support for reconstruction, while the wanton Israeli killings in Lebanon must end. At the same time, Iran should be open to concessions on the nuclear front and to fully reopening the Strait of Hormuz to global traffic. The Islamabad meeting could be a starting point, if both sides sustain dialogue while holding the ceasefire.

Tourism and trade

Consensus is vital in leveraging the strategic importance of Nicobar

The Union government's ₹92,000 crore mega-infrastructure project for the holistic development of the Great Nicobar Island (GNI) by building it up as a port and tourism-led economy has gathered speed in the last six months, even as concerns remain about its impact on the Island's ecology and the rights of local populations, the Nicobarese and the Shompen – two indigenous tribal groups. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands administration has notified a draft master plan for the project. Apart from the International Container Transhipment Port (ICTP), the airport, and power plants, the draft master plan envisions developing the GNI as a "seaside destination in a pristine, unspoilt, protected environment", outlining plans for business, adventure, biodiversity tourism, family entertainment, amusement parks, etc., along with adequate social infrastructure for healthcare, education, and livelihood. The draft is planned for a projected population of over 3.36 lakh by 2055, by which time the expected tourist inflow will be a million a year. Over 70% of the direct employment the government hopes to create will be in tourism and allied sectors. The current population of the GNI is a little less than 10,000. This transformation of the GNI, aided by the ICTP, is crucial to leverage the "strategic importance" of the Island's location at the western entrance to the Malacca Strait. The draft plan has said the port will help India achieve its "aims to capture a significant share in global sea trade".

But while the administration has sought public suggestions and objections for 30 days, it remains unclear till when this window will remain open, given that the draft does not mention when it was notified. This draft plan follows another draft plan to relocate local Nicobarese communities to make way for the project. The two plans seemingly contradict each other with regard to where existing populations may be relocated, which has renewed fears among these groups. These communities have been opposing the project's clearance since 2022, alleging that their forest rights had not been settled. While the National Green Tribunal has set aside concerns about the project's impact on the GNI's biodiversity by citing its "strategic importance", a challenge to the project's clearances remains in the Calcutta High Court. Some have also questioned the project's commercial and naval merits. Considering that the project aims to irreversibly alter the demography, and ecology of the GNI, the most prudent path for the government is to take the time needed to build a more holistic consensus over it.

Delimitation, and not women's reservation, is the issue

Sonia Gandhi
Chairperson of the Congress Parliamentary Party

The Prime Minister is making appeals to Opposition parties to support Bills that the government wants to bulldoze in a special session of Parliament when the election campaign in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal will be at its peak. There can be only one reason for the extraordinary hurry, which is to derive political advantage and place the Opposition on the defensive.

The Prime Minister is, as usual, being economical with the truth.

The Parliament passed the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023 unanimously in September 2023 during a special session. The Adhiniyam introduced Article 334-A in the Constitution which mandated one-third reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas, scheduled to come into effect after the completion of the next Census and the Census-based delimitation process. The Opposition had not asked for this condition. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Shri Mallikarjun Kharge, had forcefully demanded that the reservation provision be implemented from the 2024 Lok Sabha elections itself. For reasons best known to itself, the government did not agree.

Now, we are given to understand that Article 334-A will be amended to make women's reservation applicable from 2029 itself. Why did it take the Prime Minister 30 months to make his U-turn? And why can he not wait a few weeks to convene the special session? Opposition leaders have written to the government not once but thrice requesting that an all-party meeting be convened after the last phase of elections is over in West Bengal on April 29, to discuss what the new proposals of the government are. But that perfectly reasonable request has been turned down. Instead, the Prime Minister has resorted to writing op-eds, making appeals to political parties, and organising *sammelans*. It is an underhand tactic that reflects the Prime Minister's one-upmanship and his 'my way or the highway" approach to decision-making.

Lessons from the past

Contrast this with the manner in which the 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendment Bills were finally passed by Parliament in April 1993 and June 1993, respectively. The Bills took almost five years of discussion and debate, following which reservation for women in elections to panchayats and *nagarpalikas* became law. This was a singular achievement of the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Today, there are about 15 lakh elected women representatives in rural and urban local bodies, constituting over 40% of the total. The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023 stands on the shoulders of this achievement.

> Any delimitation involving an increase in the strength of the Lok Sabha must be politically — and not just arithmetically — equitable

The last decadal Census was due in 2021. The Modi government kept postponing it. One consequence of this has been that over 10 crore people have been deprived of their legal entitlements under the National Food Security Act, 2013 that provides the basis for the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana. Census operations have begun only after an inexplicable delay of five years. It is being proudly claimed that it is a digital Census. Senior official have themselves publicly declared that because of its digital nature, most of the population enumeration numbers will be available in 2027 itself. The government's excuses for its tearing hurry to call this session and conduct delimitation are evidently hollow.

Almost exactly a year ago, the Prime Minister announced that the 2027 Census would also be a caste census. This was after filing affidavits in the Supreme Court and answering questions in Parliament rejecting the idea of conducting a caste census. This was also after the Prime Minister accused Congress leaders calling for a caste census as suffering from what he called "an urban naxal mindset". Be that as it may, Census 2027 is supposed to enumerate the population by caste in order to give greater meaning to social justice and empowerment. Bihar and Telangana have carried out comprehensive caste surveys in their respective States, with the whole process not taking more than six months.

It is clear, therefore, that the propaganda that a caste census will delay the publication of the Census 2027 is just not true. In fact, the Prime Minister's real intention now is to further delay and derail the caste census.

The special session is scheduled to begin on April 16. Yet till now, there has been no official proposal shared with MPs on what exactly the government wants the session to consider. It appears that some formula for delimitation is being suggested. Any delimitation must be preceded by a Census exercise as in the past. And it goes without saying that any delimitation involving an increase in the strength of the Lok Sabha must be politically – and not just arithmetically – equitable. States that have been pioneers in family planning, and smaller States, must not be placed at an absolute or relative disadvantage.

A proportionate increase may, in fact, result in the loss of relative influence because the difference in absolute numbers get magnified.

Need for careful consideration

The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023 provides for reservation within reservation. This means that the one-third of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively will also be reserved for women.

During the debate in September 2023, the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha had demanded that a similar reservation be also provided for women belonging to the Other Backward Classes (OBCs). Reservation for OBCs has been already provided for in higher education and government employment.

The monsoon session of Parliament will begin in mid-July. The heavens will not fall if the government were to call an all-party meeting after April 29, to discuss its proposals with the Opposition, allowing time for a public debate, and then have the Constitution Amendment Bills considered in the monsoon session. There is simply no justification, except narrative management during troubled times, for this tearing hurry to bulldoze extremely far-reaching changes to our polity. The process is deeply flawed and anti-democratic. Reservation for women is not the issue here. That has already been settled. The real issue is delimitation which, based on the information unofficially available, is extremely dangerous and an assault on the Constitution itself.

Why India's established elite is afraid of taking risks

Kiran Mahasuar
Assistant Professor in the Strategy Area at S.P. Jain Institute of Management and Research (SPJIMR). Views expressed are personal

In F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned*, Anthony Patch possesses everything except the willingness to act. He has education, social connections, and even reasonable intelligence. What destroys him is not external circumstance but internal paralysis. He spends years waiting for his grandfather's inheritance, and by the time it arrives, he has forgotten how to exercise agency. The money comes, but the man capable of using it meaningfully no longer exists. While this might seem like a distant literary tragedy, versions of it are unfolding across India's business elite today.

Something unusual has been happening in Indian business over the past few years. Well-managed family businesses with healthy cash flows are being sold not because they face distress or strategic dead ends, but because the next generation prefers liquidity over operational continuity. VIP Industries, a leading player in the Indian branded luggage market, is one example.

What makes this pattern strange is that these exits are happening during a period of unprecedented opportunity. India's domestic market is expanding, global supply chains are diversifying, and capital is abundant. Yet many second- and third-generation business families seem to be choosing passive investment avenues, such as running family offices, over the businesses their parents built, even though these generations are better educated and more globally networked than their predecessors. Why are they choosing not to build?

Preservation over creation

Peter Turchin's theory of elite overproduction offers one lens for understanding this. He argues that societies become unstable when they produce more credentialed elite aspirants than the number of elite positions available. The usual result is political instability as the surplus elites challenge the incumbents for power. But India seems to be generating a different outcome. While there is clearly an oversupply of educated, well-connected individuals relative to the number of influential positions, rather than triggering open conflict or displacement, what the country is seeing is a risk retreat among incumbents.

> The inherited elite, the people who control the most capital and have the most institutional access, are opting out of the riskiest, and most transformational kinds of building

Existing business families are not being forced out. They are choosing custodianship over creation. Capital gets recycled into assets that preserve wealth, rather than create it, such as real estate portfolios, financial market positions, and established brands. Succession planning becomes about maintaining control, and not about expanding the frontier of what the family enterprise does. The result is stasis rather than revolution. India has surplus elite capacity, but that capacity is not being channelled into high-risk, long-gestation ventures. It is being absorbed into wealth preservation.

The R&D problem

Consider how India's private sector approaches Research and Development (R&D). As a percentage of revenue, Indian companies spend dramatically less on R&D than their counterparts in China, South Korea, or Taiwan. This is not because Indian firms are less profitable or because the regulatory environment makes R&D impossible. The issue seems to be that R&D represents exactly the kind of risk that second-generation business families find unattractive. It requires patient capital; and results are uncertain. Failures are visible and cannot be easily explained to minority shareholders accustomed to steady dividends. The payoff, if it comes, arrives years later and may benefit successors rather than the decision-maker. By contrast, acquiring an existing brand, expanding into real estate, or optimising an inherited manufacturing process offers more legible returns with less reputational exposure. The anomaly becomes clearer when you compare today's business elite with first-generation entrepreneurs. When Dhirubhai Ambani built the Patalganga refinery, he was betting everything on an outcome that was far from certain. The investment could not be quickly reversed, and failure would have been total and public. But that irreversibility was precisely what made the bet transformational. India's pivot to a market-oriented economy is interspersed with many such stories of first-generation entrepreneurs taking risky bets. So, what changed in the last two decades or so?

One hypothesis is that for someone inheriting a successful business, the calculation reverses. Risk is no longer the source of differentiation. It is a threat to something already secured. Moreover, there are more avenues for being a passive investor, such as a venture capitalist or a limited partner. Then, how can India's private sector be incentivised to invest in R&D?

Oswald Spengler made a distinction that feels relevant here, though he was writing about civilisational cycles rather than emerging economies. He argued that societies move from what he called 'culture' to 'civilisation'. Culture is rooted, productive, and comfortable with risk because it is still building foundational institutions. Civilisation is abstract, financial, and focused on administering and extracting value from what already exists. The pattern he describes maps uncomfortably well onto what is happening among India's urban business elite. Increasingly, wealth is held by people who think like portfolio managers rather than operators. Their assets are internationally diversified. Their downside is cushioned by family networks and political connections. They sell, diversify, and preserve. However, the aggregate outcome is a business elite that no longer behaves like it has skin in the game over generational time horizons.

India's dilemma

The problem is not that India lacks entrepreneurs. First-generation founders are still emerging and taking risks. The problem is that the inherited elite, the people who control the most capital and have the most institutional access, are opting out of the riskiest, and most transformational kinds of building. Anthony Patch's tragedy was that his inheritance arrived after he had lost the capacity to use it. India now has an inheritance class that receives wealth and position early enough to use it, but chooses not to, because the social structures that would make risk-taking rational have been replaced by ones that make waiting and selling more attractive.

The question, then, is not whether India has capital. The question is whether the people who control that capital still see themselves as builders of something larger than their own portfolio returns. And if they do not, what does that mean for the kind of economy India becomes over the next several decades?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Moon moment

The successful splash down of the Artemis II mission capsule, Orion, in the Pacific Ocean marked a defining milestone in NASA's collaborative deep space endeavours. The 10-day challenging space voyage has scripted a historic return of humans to the lunar flyby after more than five decades since they last ventured there. The enduring legacy of the Artemis II mission lies not only in the vital scientific data it gathered, but also in awakening the dreams of young students. The insights from the Artemis II mission also holds pivotal relevance for the ISRO in the context of India's upcoming human spaceflight mission, Gaganyaan.

G. Ramasubramanyam
Vijayawada

Deadlock in Islamabad

The much anticipated peace talks between the U.S and Iran in Islamabad have failed to yield a meaningful outcome, as both sides continue to remain entrenched in their respective positions. A key impediment to progress is the ongoing conflict in Lebanon, where Israel's military actions have drawn strong objections from Iran. In this context, the U.S. must play a constructive role by urging Israel to de-escalate tensions and cease hostilities.

M. Jeyaram
Tamil Nadu

Unity in diversity

The idea of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) resurfaces prominently during elections. While its objective of ensuring equality and justice is commendable, India's vast diversity cannot be ignored. The country is home to multiple religions. Given this complexity, any move towards UCC must be cautious and inclusive. The Central government should constitute a broad-based committee comprising not just politicians, but also intellectuals, social workers, and representatives from religious and tribal communities.
Such a body must deliberate thoroughly on sensitive issues and propose balanced solutions.

T. Kailash Ditya
Hyderabad

Epic comeback

Chennai Super Kings delivered a vintage performance against Delhi Capitals, staging a remarkable comeback when it mattered most. This emphatic victory not only revived their campaign but also injected a fresh wave of confidence and belief into the side. This memorable win, achieved at a crucial stage of the tournament, will be cherished by fans and could well serve as the spark the CSK needs to reignite their campaign in this edition of the IPL.

A.P. Thiruvadi
Chennai

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Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Tapping fisheries in reservoirs

Abhilaksh Likhi

Union Secretary, Department of Fisheries, Government of India

Budget 2026-27 highlights undertaking of initiatives for integrated development of fisheries in 500 reservoirs and Amrit Sarovars (ponds developed under Mission Amrit Sarovar) to enhance income of fish farmers. This will also involve strengthening market access to fish farmer-producer organisations and cooperatives.

India is the second largest fish producer in the world. Now, it is also the second largest globally in aquaculture production. The country has witnessed a 106% increase in the national fish production since 2013-14 that stands at a record 197.75 lakh tonnes in 2024-25. Interestingly, 75% of our fish production comes from inland fisheries that include freshwater, brackish, and saline water resources. Reservoirs, spread over an area of more than 31.50 lakh hectares, are a major source of freshwater fisheries and aquaculture. Fish production from these water bodies is approximately 18 lakh tonnes.

Located primarily in eastern, central and the peninsular regions, these reservoirs contribute to the livelihood of millions of fish farmers. This is especially true for economically backward and water-scarce regions where they play a crucial role in providing direct/indirect employment and food security.

While Madhya Pradesh has the maximum area under reservoirs (about six lakh hectares), Tamil Nadu has the highest number of reservoirs at over 8,000.

A key factor in the rise of the country's fish production is the increase in fish productivity in reservoirs to 100 kg per hectare compared to 50 kg in 2006. This has been made possible by application of cage culture technology with sufficient stocking of quality seed backed by requisite budgetary support under flagship programmes such as Blue Revolution (BR) and the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). While the Indian major carps (Catla, Rohu, Mrigal) form the core species for stocking, need-based stocking of additional species (Tilapia, Pangasius, etc.), in consultation with beneficiaries, is provided under the above programmes.

These reservoir cages, floating or stationary, are typically made of synthetic netting or mesh with a structure for support. The mesh allows for natural water flow, ensuring oxygen and nutrient exchange with the surrounding environment. These cages are anchored to the bottom or suspended from buoys to maintain their position and depth. This facilitates easier feeding, monitoring, and disease management. Further, to promote species diversification, in addition to rectangular cages, circular cages are increasingly being deployed.

Bimal Chandra Oran is a fish farmer from Saraikela district in Jharkhand who has taken up aquaculture for his livelihood in the Chandil reservoir ecosystem. As a member of the Chandil Bandh Visthapit Matsyajibhi Swalambhi Sahkar Samiti (CBVMSS), he set up two cages and was provided subsidised seed and feed inputs. This was followed by a series of capacity-building trainings to upgrade his skills. Over the years, he has cultured Tilapia and Pangasius species through the reservoir cage technology. Backed by marketing support through cooperative society, he has been able to produce three tonnes of fish, thereby achieving an annual turnover of more than ₹3 lakh.

An Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)-Central Institute of Inland Fisheries (CIFRI) study envisions that aquaculture productivity can go up to 300 kg from the current 100 kg per hectare in such reservoirs. To achieve this potential, experts suggest adopting a value chain approach through the integrated development of these reservoirs. This includes converged setting up of hatcheries, feed mills, storage sheds, ice plants, berthing platforms, auction centres, and marketing retail outlets, and ensuring availability of boats and refrigerated trucks.

To ground the above value chain approach, a cluster-based strategy is being implemented by the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) to enhance the competitiveness of the reservoir ecosystem through end-to-end solutions. In line with this strategy, recently a reservoir cluster has been announced for the Halalai and Indra Sagar dams in Madhya Pradesh. The effort will be, first and foremost, to identify sectoral gaps in fisheries production, productivity, and processing capacities within this reservoir ecosystem. Critical, for instance, herein will be the assessment of multiplicity of agencies owning fishing rights, which sometimes poses challenges in data gathering. And without doubt, it will also entail enhancing economies of scale for local fish farmers by their aggregation through cooperatives and fish farmer-producer organisations. Such reservoir clusters will be replicated in other States and Union Territories as well.

In addition, Mission Amrit Sarovar is being implemented with the core vision of conserving surface and underground water in district ponds. A key innovation herein is mapping of user groups for pond management through community participation. Each Amrit Sarovar is designed to have a pondage area of minimum one acre with a holding capacity of 10,000 cubic metres. The Amrit Sarovar at Dine Dite Rijo in Upper Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh is a success story of a retention basin that has been successfully used for stocking and aquaculture of ornamental fishes. Tapping fisheries in reservoirs and Amrit Sarovars aligns with the Viksit Bharat@2047 vision to empower fishermen families to thrive and contribute to the nation's Blue Revolution.

The rise in the country's fish production has been made possible by the application of cage culture technology

State of contrasts

Karnataka's growth continues to be marked by sharp inter-district disparities

STATE OF PLAY

Nagesh Prabhu
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A report tabled in the Karnataka legislature during the Budget Session has reignited the debate on persistent regional imbalances in the State. Karnataka's growth story continues to be marked by sharp inter-district disparities, with divergence of key economic indicators widening over the years.

Characterised as a "State of contrasts", Karnataka has recorded strong growth over the years (8.1% in 2025-26). However, this has not translated into economic convergence among districts. Growth remains concentrated in a few districts, while most continue to lag. Despite the State ranking second in Goods and Services Tax collection after Maharashtra and emerging as a hub of technology, innovation, and startups, its economic activity is largely confined to Bengaluru, besides the growth in the coastal districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi and the coffee-growing regions of the Western Ghats.

The 2026 report on regional imbalances, tabled by a committee headed by noted economist M. Govinda Rao, paints a stark picture. Of the State's 236 taluks, 177 have been classified as backward, including 59 as most backward, 59 as more backward, and 59 as backward. Only 59 taluks are categorised as developed. The share of backward taluks has risen from 65% (114 of 175 taluks) in 2001-02 to 72.8% in 2022-23. Of the 59 more backward taluks, 43 are in north Karnataka and only 16 are in south Karnataka, underlining the widening regional disparities despite overall

economic progress.

Over the past two decades, the government has spent ₹35,380.24 crore on infrastructure development in backward taluks. However, there has been limited improvement in outcomes due to "lack of prioritisation of projects and schemes with large social rates of return" and inefficiencies in the functioning of regional development boards – pointing to a serious administrative failure.

Within north Karnataka, Kalaburagi division accounts for the largest share (42%) of most backward taluks. This region, now known as Kalyana Karnataka (formerly Hyderabad-Karnataka), enjoys a special status under Article 371J of the Constitution since 2013.

Further, the committee's analysis of the growth trajectories of different districts over the years indicates slow improvement of districts in north Karnataka and dramatic growth in Bengaluru and coastal districts. Inequality in per capita income remains stark. According to the State's Economic Survey (2025-26), Bengaluru Urban leads with a per capita income of ₹8,55,960, followed by Dakshina Kannada (₹6,26,279), Udupi (₹6,00,683), Chikkamagaluru (₹4,94,787) and Shivamogga (₹3,89,743) – all above the State average of ₹3,86,156 in 2024-25. In contrast, Kalyana Karnataka and Kittur Karnataka in North Karnataka have recorded significantly lower figures at ₹189,938 and ₹226,213, respectively.

Karnataka's industrialisation and service-sector expansion have remained overwhelmingly Bengaluru-centric. Bengaluru and its periphery, which contribute nearly 40% to the State's Gross State Domestic Product, are home to many Fortune 500 companies and have skilled manpower for various sectors and elite public institutions. While coastal districts are recognised as the 'cradle of Indian banking' and have grown through private entrepreneurship, the Mysuru region has grown through relatively better infrastructure, irrigation, education, and connectivity.

This widening gap reflects the fact that a high percentage of the population in the north Karnataka region still depends on the agriculture sector, and 'new economy' sectors are yet to emerge here on a large scale. The recent protests by government job aspirants in Dharwad in north Karnataka underscore the lack of alternative employment opportunities. More than two decades ago, the D.M. Nanjundappa Committee (2002) found that north Karnataka was underrepresented in public sector jobs (34.84%), while south Karnataka accounted for a dominant share (65.16%).

Increased spending alone may not suffice to spur growth. Multiple studies have argued that addressing regional disparities will require a bottom-up development approach, greater decentralisation, and stronger accountability. Sustained and balanced growth will depend on targeted investments in education, healthcare, and infrastructure, backed by responsive governance.

Poll-bound T.N. among top performers in many indicators

The State's performance exceeds the national average across various social and education-related indicators; however, it is a mixed bag in other indicators

DATA POINT

Sambavi Parthasarathy

Tamil Nadu is going to polls on April 23 and political parties have made a slew of promises, many of them having women and education at their centre. At this point, an indicator-based analysis shows that though the State remains a frontrunner on several economic, educational and women-related indicators, concerns remain.

Firstly, Tamil Nadu recorded a Human Development Index score of 0.787 in 2023, higher than the national average. This indicator, as defined by the United Nations Development Programme, is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development such as life expectancy, education, and standard of living. (Table 1).

Data shows that Tamil Nadu is strong across various economic indicators. For select indicators such as the per capita net domestic product – the net average income earned by an individual in the State at a certain period – and average daily wage rates in rural areas, Tamil Nadu's figures remain much higher than India's average. In fact, with an average daily wage rate of ₹573.2 in rural areas, the State's wages are the highest among others with the exception of Kerala.

Tamil Nadu's debt-to-GSDP ratio in 2023-24, as per the latest Finance Commission report, stood at 29.9%. However, the State's GSDP growth rate of 11.9% during 2024-25, the highest among all States, is likely to improve its fiscal indicators.

While the State performed well across many health and women-related indicators, it lagged in areas such as sanitation and health scheme coverage (Table 2). It is one of the five top performing States across several health indicators related to children and women. According to Niti Aayog, its maternal mortality ratio is 54 per lakh live births, far lower than the national average of 97.

A similar pattern can be seen for indicators related to children too. As of 2023, the State's infant mortality rate is 12 per thousand children, nearly half of India's average. It is also the fourth State to have the least share of children aged 0-5 with stunted growth. It ranks second when it comes to share of children with all basic vaccinations (%).

Though 66.5% of the surveyed households had at least one member covered by a health scheme, Tamil Nadu lags behind seven other States in this indicator. The share of population in the State remaining with unimproved sanitation facilities was also higher than the national average.

Tamil Nadu is also a frontrunner when it comes to education-related indicators (Table 3). The State ranks among the top-performing States for Adjusted Net Enrolment Rate (ANER) in elementary education – the number of pupils of school-age group for primary education, enrolled either in primary or secondary education as a share of the total population in that age group.

Tamil Nadu also has the third lowest dropout rate among the States. Further, the State's Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher secondary education is much higher than the all India average. However, the State ranked 16 among 29 States when it came to the Gender Parity Index in higher education – the ratio of female to male students enrolled at a specific level of education.

However, the State lagged on select environment-related indicators (Table 4). It was among the top seven States that generated high amounts of plastic waste per thousand population and consumed high levels of fossil fuels per capita.

(With inputs from Nitika Francis and Devyanshi Bihani)

In the fray: Campaign materials on display ahead of Assembly election. RAGU R.

Tracking **progress** | The data for the tables are sourced from the NFHS (2021-22), NITI Ayog, Global Data Lab, Economic Survey 2024-25 and Parliament Q&A

Table 1: Tamil Nadu's values and ranks in terms of Human Development Index and select economic indicators

Indicator	Tamil Nadu's Value	Tamil Nadu's Rank (Out of 29)	India Average	Top performing States/UTs
Human Development Index (2023)	0.787	10	0.732	Goa (0.862), Kerala (0.860), New Delhi (0.837)
Per capita NSDP, current prices (2024-25)(₹)	361,619	4	205,324	Delhi (4,93,024), Telangana (3,87,623), Karnataka (3,80,906)
Average daily wage rates in rural areas (₹)	573.2	2	398	Kerala (868.7), Tamil Nadu (573.2), Himachal Pradesh (516)

Table 2: Tamil Nadu's values and ranks across select indicators related to health and women

Indicator	Tamil Nadu's Value	Rank (Out of 30)	India Average	Top performing States/UTs
Share of women aged 15-19 who have begun childbearing (%)	6.3%	19	6.80%	Uttarakhand (2.4%), Kerala (2.4%), Goa (2.7%)
Infant mortality rate	12	6	25	Kerala (4.4), Goa (5.6), Sikkim (11.2)
Share of population with unimproved sanitation facility (%)	21.7%	23	19.3%	Mizoram (0.1%), Kerala (0.2%), Sikkim (0.3%)
Share of children aged 0-5 years whose growth is stunted (%)	25%	4	36%	Sikkim (22%), Kerala (23%), Manipur (23%)
Percentage of children with all basic vaccinations (%)	89%	2	77%	Odisha (91%), Tamil Nadu (89%), Himachal Pradesh (89%)
Women using a hygienic method of menstrual protection (%)	98.4%	1	77.6%	Tamil Nadu (98.4%), Kerala (93.3%), Punjab (93.3%)
Maternal Mortality Ratio (per 1,00,000 live births)	54	5	97	Kerala (19), Maharashtra (33), Telangana (43)
Households with at least one member covered by a health scheme (%)	66.5%	8	41%	Rajasthan (87.8%), Andhra Pradesh (80.2%), Goa (73.1%)

Table 3: Tamil Nadu's values and ranks across select indicators related to education out of 29 States

Indicator	Tamil Nadu's Value	Tamil Nadu's Rank	India Average	Top Performing States/UTs
Dropout rate	4.5%	3	12.6%	Manipur (1.3%), Himachal Pradesh (1.5%), Tamil Nadu (4.5%)
Adjusted Net Enrolment Rate (ANER) in elementary education (%)	99.5%	2	96.5%	Multiple States (100%), Tamil Nadu (99.5%), Punjab (99.2%)
Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher secondary (%)	81.50%	5	57.6%	Delhi (94.9%), Himachal Pradesh (94.1%), Kerala (85%)
Gender Parity Index (GPI) for higher education	1.01	16	N/A	Kerala (1.44), Himachal Pradesh (1.33), Nagaland (1.28)

Table 4: Tamil Nadu's values and ranks across select indicators related to environment

Indicator	Tamil Nadu's Value	Tamil Nadu's Rank	India Average	Top Performing States/UTs
Plastic waste generated per 1,000 population (tonnes/annum)	5.64	5 out of 23	3.04	Goa (18.9), Delhi (16.9), Telangana (12.5)
Per capita fossil fuel consumption (in kg.)	200.75	7	166.43	Haryana (341.9), Gujarat (339.2), H.P. (271.7)

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 13, 1976

Hydrogeological map to be compiled

Madras, April 12: The Central Groundwater Board is compiling a hydrogeological map of India to be presented at the 25th International Geological Congress in Sydney. This map will be drawn on a scale 1:5,000,000. Under the international hydrological decade programme, 700 hydrograph stations have been selected to monitor seasonal water levels from different geological formations under known hydrogeological settings.

For the first time on a national scale, the Board has undertaken systematic search for locating groundwater. It has so far covered over a million sq.km. out of a total estimated area of 3.2 million sq.km. Data collected by these stations on water level fluctuations and temperature variations covers over 60 per cent of unexplored area in the country. Over 5,000 short term water supply investigations in drought prone areas have been completed. These are confined to small isolated pockets and resulted in setting up of new hydrogeological horizons.

The Board has undertaken special investigations for locating and investigating thermal springs, mines and coalfields to spot out inland salinity of groundwater in these areas.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 12, 1926

America spends £2,900 millions yearly on motors

The American Bureau of Industrial Technology announces that America's motoring bill exceeded £2,800,000,000 last year. Four million motor-cars are now manufactured in America yearly, a quarter of a million cars are exported and the remainder are bought by Americans at an average price, including accessories, of £200. It costs the average American £140 annually to run his car. The following table shows America's total motor-car expenditure in million pounds:– Cost of cars and accessories 750; depreciation 500; upkeep and repairs 400; chauffeurs' wages 320; petrol 240; garages 180; taxes 125; tyres 123; interest on investment 100; oil 50; insurance 60. The total is 2,853 million pounds. –"The Statesman."

(The Hindu did not have an edition on April 13, 1926)

From Page One

Iran, U.S. blame each other as talks end

Iran had very good initiatives to show goodwill in talks, which led to progress in the negotiations, the Iranian Speaker said in comments carried by state media on Sunday. Iranian officials earlier said the talks fell apart over two or three key issues, withouth specifying them, blaming what they called U.S. overreach.

"It is imperative that the parties continue to uphold their commitment to cease fire," Pakistan's Foreign Minister said.

Iran has long denied seeking nuclear weapons but has insisted on its right to a civilian nuclear programme. It has offered "affirmative commitments" in the past in writing, including in the landmark 2015 nuclear deal. Experts say its stockpile of enriched uranium, though not weapons-grade, is only a short technical step away.

Since the U.S. and Israel launched the war on February 28, it has killed at least 3,000 people in Iran, 2,020 in Lebanon, 23 in Israel, and more than a dozen in Gulf Arab states, and caused lasting damage to infrastructure in half-a-dozen West Asian countries. Iran's grip on the Strait of Hormuz has largely cut off the Persian Gulf and its oil and gas exports from the global economy, sending energy prices soaring.

The deadlock – and Mr. Vance's take-it-or-leave-it proposal that Iran end its nuclear programme – mirrored February's nuclear talks in Switzerland.

Though U.S. President Donald Trump has said the subsequent war was meant to compel Iran's leaders to abandon nuclear ambitions, each side's positions appeared unchanged in negotiations following six weeks of fighting.

An Iranian diplomatic official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, denied that negotiations had failed over Iran's nuclear ambitions.

"Iran is not seeking to acquire nuclear weapons, but it has the right to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes," the official said, reiterating Iran's longstanding negotiating position.

The U.S. and Iran entered talks with sharply different proposals and contrasting assumptions about their leverage to end the war. Before negotiations began, the ceasefire was already threatened by deep disagreements and Israel's continued attacks against the Iranian-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Electorate falls by 10.2% in 9 States and 3 U.T.s

According to the EC data, 66.88 lakh deceased voters were removed, with the highest number from Uttar Pradesh (25.47 lakh) followed by West Bengal (24.16 lakh). In all, 1.28 crore duplicate voters were deleted, with Uttar Pradesh having the highest share at 79.5 lakh.

A total of 63.16 lakh names were removed following objections and adjudication through Form 7, with West Bengal recording the highest at 33.15 lakh.

Phase 2 of the SIR was conducted in Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Puducherry, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Goa. The final electoral rolls were published on different dates, with Uttar Pradesh being the last on April 10.

The next phase, covering 17 States and five Union Territories, is likely to begin after the Assembly polls. They are Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Ladakh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Delhi, Odisha, Punjab, Sikkim, Tripura, Telangana, and Uttarakhand.

In Assam, a "special revision", instead of the SIR, was completed on February 10.

Asha Bhosle, versatile singer, dies in Mumbai

Over the decades, Ms. Bhosle recorded more songs than any other female playback singer of her time. The Guinness World Records recognised her for the most studio recordings. She was honoured with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the Padma Vibhushan, and the Maharashtra Bhushan. Some of her famous songs are *Chura Liya Hai Tumne Jo Dil Ko*, *Dum Maro Dum*, *Piya Tu Ab To Aaja* and *In Aankhon Ki Masti*.

Maharashtra Governor Jishnu Dev Varma said her versatility and contribution left a lasting mark on music lovers. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said her demise marked the loss of another towering figure from the Mangeshkar family after "Lata Didi". Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Sunetra Ajit Pawar paid their tributes and mourned the demise. Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said her songs would remain her enduring legacy.

The Congress party condoled the demise of singer, with party chief Mallikarjun Kharge saying that an era of playback singing has come to an end. "An epitome of legendary versatility and grace, her unique style of singing was appreciated by millions across the globe," Mr. Kharge said in an X post. Congress leader Sachin Sawant said she exemplified versatility through her career. Filmmaker Subhash Ghai and lyricist Prasoon Joshi were among those who remembered the iconic voice.

(with PTI inputs)

Support women's quota law amendments: PM to parties

Kharge questions the timing and points to the lack of consultations as Modi says it is imperative that the 2029 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections are conducted with women's reservation in place

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Ahead of the extended sitting of the Budget Session to clear amendments to the women's reservation Act, 2023, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday wrote to the heads of all political parties seeking their cooperation, calling it a moment to demonstrate responsibility towards women.

In response, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge reiterated the demand for an all-party meeting for pre-legislative deliberations and questioned the timing of introducing the amendment Bill amid Assembly elections.

The government seeks to introduce amendments delinking the implementation of women's reservation in legislative bodies from delimitation based on the ongoing enumeration. Instead, it proposes to carry out delimitation based on the 2011 Census, without using population as the metric to determine a State's representation in the Lok Sabha.

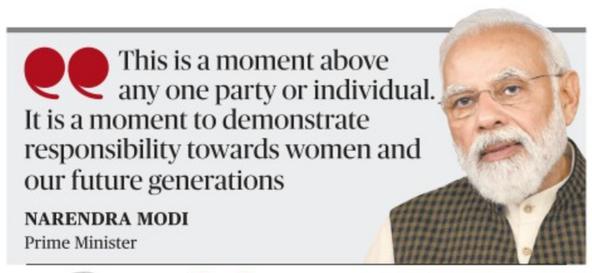
"Any society progresses only when women have the opportunity to progress, make decision and, more importantly to lead. For India to realise its vision of becoming a developed nation, it is essential that women play a greater and active role in this journey," Mr. Modi said in his letter dated April 11. Recalling the unanimous passage of the *Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam* in September 2023, he described it as a "memorable moment" in India's parliamentary journey and said it reflected unity across party lines.

Referring to deliberations at the time of the law's passage, the Prime Minister said there had been broad consensus that its provisions should come into effect at the earliest. He said it was imperative that the 2029 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections were conducted with women's reservation in place. He urged leaders to come together in "one voice" to pass the amendments. "This is a moment above any one party or individual. It is a moment to demonstrate responsibility towards women and our future generations," he wrote.

Mr. Kharge reminded the Prime Minister that the women's reservation law had been passed unanimously 30 months ago and that the Congress had demanded its immediate implementation at the time. He said that while the Prime Minister's letter referred to a consensus on early implementation, the government had failed to act on it then.

Mr. Kharge said the Opposition had not been taken into confidence ahead of the special sitting and criticised the government for not sharing details of the delimitation exercise linked to the law's implementation. Without clarity on delimitation and related aspects, he said, it would be impossible to hold a meaningful discussion.

Rejecting Mr. Modi's claim of consultations with political parties, the Congress chief said Opposition parties had been urging the government to convene an all-party meeting after the completion of the current round of elections on April 29 to discuss the constitutional amendments being contemplated. He also questioned the timing. "The calling of a special sitting during the ongoing state elections only reinforces our belief that your government is hurrying the implementation of the Bill to gain political mileage rather than truly empower women," he said.



> This is a moment above any one party or individual. It is a moment to demonstrate responsibility towards women and our future generations
>
> **NARENDRA MODI**
> Prime Minister

> The calling of the sitting during elections reinforces our belief that govt. is hurrying the implementation of Bill to gain political mileage rather than truly empower women
>
> **MALLIKARJUN KHARGE**
> Congress president

China giving fictitious names to Indian territory, says Centre

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

China has created a new county in the restive Xinjiang province, named Cenling, near PoK

India on Sunday reiterated its rejection of China's attempts at assigning "fictitious names to places which form part of the territory of India". The External Affairs Ministry, in a statement, said such attempts were "mischievous", adding such actions "detract" ongoing normalisation process in the bilateral relationship.

"Such attempts by China at introducing false claims and manufacturing baseless narratives cannot alter the undeniable reality that these places and territories, including Arunachal Pradesh, were, are, and will always remain an integral and inalienable part of India," Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

"These actions by the Chinese side detract from ongoing efforts to stabilise and normalise bilateral ties. China should refrain from actions which inject negativity into relations and undermine efforts to create better understanding," said Mr. Jaiswal.

India last year had protested after China created He'an and Hekang counties in Hotan (Khotan) Prefecture, saying that parts of these territories fell within the Union Territory of Ladakh. He'an included parts of the Aksai Chin plateau, which has been in focus because of the long-running India-China border issue. Continuing with this process, China has created a new county in the restive Xinjiang province, named Cenling. Cenling was announced on March 26 by the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region government and as of now details of its administrative divisions and precise boundaries are not known.

Cenling is located near the Karakoram mountain range, which falls in the vicinity of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Afghanistan's Wakhan corridor. The apparent aim behind creating the Cenling county so close to PoK is to ensure security of Xinjiang, which is dealing with Uyghur insurgency and terrorist groups such as the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM). This region is also the starting point of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a project that India has criticised as it violates India's sovereignty rights over PoK.

Biotechnology can address challenges to traditional farming practices: experts

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

With the agriculture industry projected to grow 2.5 times by 2033, biotech experts underscored the growing importance of agri-biotechnology in the coming years.

They were speaking at a webinar organised by the Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) Chennai, in association with *The Hindu*, on 'Biotech for Sustainable Agriculture and Crop Productivity'.

This webinar was the last in the five-part webinar series on the topic – Biotechnology: Role in Industry 5.O Sustainable Future Pathways.

G. Jayaraman, professor and dean, School of Bio Sciences and Technology, VIT Chennai, said there were challenges to traditional farming practices which could be addressed through biotechnology. Gayatri Venkataraman, senior principal scientist at M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, warned that with every one degree Celsius increase in temperature, India's wheat yield could decline by 6% to 10%.

Dolly Wattal Dhar, dean of School of Agriculture Sciences, Sharda University, spoke about the scope of research, job opportunities, and how people could contribute to food security by learning about biotech tools.

Lipin Dev, director and partner, VT Ecogreen Technologies, spoke about the importance of secondary agriculture and the emerging opportunities therein. He explained how biotechnology was a value-addition to the primary agricultural produce once the crops were harvested.

The webinar can be viewed at https://newsth.live/THVITSY

163 children being 'trafficked' to Maharashtra from Bihar rescued in M.P.; 8 arrested

The Hindu Bureau
BHOPAL

The accused claimed that the children were being taken to Latur for admission to a madrasa

In a major operation, 163 minor boys were rescued from the Katni railway station in Madhya Pradesh when they were allegedly being trafficked from Bihar to Maharashtra, officials said on Sunday.

The children, aged between six and 14, were rescued in a joint operation by the Government Railway Police (GRP) and the Railway Protection Force (RPF) on Saturday night.

The operation followed an intelligence input from the district Child Welfare Committee (CWC) that eight men were escorting the boys on an express train.

The Superintendent of Police (GRP), Jabalpur, Simala Prasad told *The Hindu* that the children were being taken from Bihar's Araria and nearby areas to Latur in Maharashtra.

Recording statement

Ms. Prasad said all eight men had been arrested and booked under Section 143 (trafficking of persons) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The CWC is currently recording the statements of the children.

"As per the preliminary investigation, the accused claimed that the children were being taken to Latur for admission to a madrasa. However, we are going to verify the claims in both Bihar and Maharashtra," she said.

The officer added that a team would soon go to Latur for investigation into the case.

Ms. Prasad said that teams were formed after receiving the intelligence input and the train was intercepted at the Katni station.

Ahead of polls, ED steps up action in Bengal

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has taken action in several cases of alleged money laundering and corruption in West Bengal, carrying out a series of searches and seizures, and issuing summonses over the past few weeks as the State Assembly election unfolds.

On Saturday, searches were conducted at the residence of former Trinamool Congress Minister Partha Chatterjee and the office of "middleman" Prasanna Kumar Roy, who is currently in judicial custody.

The ED had arrested Mr. Chatterjee in July 2022 in the primary teachers' recruitment scam case. He was granted conditional bail by the Supreme Court in early 2025.

Searches and seizures

A day earlier, the central agency raided several locations in a case allegedly involving Niranjan Chandra Saha and others. The case pertains to the alleged diversion of Public Distribution System wheat meant for welfare schemes.

According to the agency, the accused procured wheat through unauthorised channels and disguised its origin by repackaging it after removing Food Corporation of India (FCI) and State government markings.

Security personnel outside the residence of former Trinamool Minister Partha Chatterjee in Kolkata during a search by the ED. ANI

In the "illegal" coal mining case, the ED filed a prosecution complaint on April 9 against five persons, including Chinmoy Mondal and Kiran Khan. The accused were part of an organised syndicate operating in the Durgapur-Asansol region and adjoining areas.

Searches linked to Biswajit Podder alias Sona Pappu, Jay S. Kamdar and others on April 8 led to the purported seizure of about ₹1.47 crore in cash, besides gold jewellery and silver valued at over ₹67 lakh, a vehicle, and a revolver of American make. The agency has alleged that they were part of an organised criminal syndicate involved in extortion, land grabbing, and unauthorised construction.

Merlin and I-PAC cases

The ED also carried out searches on April 8 as part of a money laundering probe related to Merlin Projects Limited.

The agency has alleged the use of forged documents to fraudulently acquire land parcels, including public land, which were later commercially exploited through real estate projects.

On April 2, searches in Hyderabad, Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Vijayawada and Ranchi, were conducted in the I-PAC case.

Earlier this month, the agency had issued summonses to Trinamool Congress Ministers Sujit Bose and Rathin Ghosh in the alleged municipal recruitment scam case.

They are yet to record their statements.

Yet another search operation in Kolkata on March 28 pertained to alleged land grabbing and forgery by one Amit Ganguly and others.

The "syndicate" targeted high-value land parcels, used forged documents to show ownership, developed real estate projects, and sold units to unsuspecting buyers.

The ED investigation is based on over 20 cases registered by the State police, particularly in South 24 Parganas.

This apart, the agency has attached assets worth about ₹18.50 crore in the South Point Education Society case, in connection with the alleged siphoning of its funds under the guise of manpower and service contracts.

BJP gears up to elect Bihar Legislature Party leader

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

The countdown to name the first BJP Chief Minister of Bihar started on Sunday after the party appointed Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan as central observer to oversee the election of BJP Legislature Party chief in the State. Mr. Chouhan said that he will go to Bihar on April 14.

In Patna, JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar has called a Cabinet meeting on April 14, the Cabinet Secretariat said. Sources said Mr. Kumar will make a formal announcement about his exit in the meeting, after which he will resign. The legislators of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) will meet in Patna and the new Chief Minister is likely to be sworn in on April 15 at the Lok Bhavan.

ASSEMBLY POLLS

AJP candidate summoned by police in Assam

The Assam Jatiya Parishad on Sunday slammed Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma after its candidate for Guwahati Central Kunki Chowdhury was summoned by the police in an election-related case and claimed that the ruling party was rattled after seeing that the mandate has gone against it in the constituency.

Ms. Chowdhury reached the Panbazar Police Station in the morning after receiving a summons. A case was filed against her and her campaign manager, Sandeep Yadav, by a BJP activist Naba Kumar Lahkar on April 9, alleging the duo violated the Model Code of Conduct (MCC)

The AJP has strongly condemned the "harassment" of its candidate by the police, and has lodged a formal complaint with the Chief Electoral Officer of Assam. PTI

AJP leader Kunki Chowdhury after casting her vote in Guwahati on Thursday. ANI

Over 3.6 crore to vote in Phase 1 in Bengal: EC

More than 3.6 crore electors across 16 districts are eligible to exercise their franchise in the first phase of the West Bengal Assembly election on April 23, according to Election Commission data.

The electoral rolls for the first phase have 1.84 crore men, 1.75 crore women and 465 persons of the third gender, the EC data released on Saturday showed.

Among the districts, Murshidabad accounts for the highest number of voters with 50.26 lakh, followed by Purba Medinipur (41.6 lakh) and Paschim Medinipur (37.7 lakh). At the other end, Kalimpong has the lowest number of voters at 2.01 lakh.

An EC official said the electoral rolls have been "updated after due revision and verification to ensure maximum accuracy and inclusiveness". PTI

> Today, we have modern-day reincarnations of Dyer and Curzon sitting in Delhi and trying to rule Bengal through remote control
>
> **ABHISHEK BANERJEE**
> Trinamool Congress leader

NIA detains seven in Malda gherao case

The NIA on Sunday detained seven people, including a Congress candidate, and arrested a panchayat member of the ISF over the gherao of judicial officers by locals in Malda protesting the deletion of names in the SIR exercise, an officer said. The NIA has been tasked with probing the April 1 incident. PTI

> Tamil people will never allow communal mobs to occupy Tamil fortress nurtured by Periyar, Annadurai, Karunanidhi, and BJP has realised this
>
> **M.K. STALIN**
> Chief Minister and DMK leader

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's grand nephew, Chandra Kumar Bose, joined the Trinamool Congress in the presence of senior leaders. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Netaji's grand nephew Chandra Bose joins Trinamool ahead of polls

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's grand nephew Chandra Kumar Bose, who quit the Bharatiya Janata Party in 2023, joined the Trinamool Congress on Sunday. Mr. Bose said his earlier decision to join the BJP was a "historic mistake".

"A few years ago, I made a historic mistake by being a part of the BJP. I rectified that mistake by joining the Trinamool, because with Bengal's history, tradition and culture, there are no similarities with the BJP," Mr. Chandra Bose said.

In the recent months, Mr. Chandra Bose had been critical of the special intensive revision (SIR) process in West Bengal.

Slams BJP's politics

He said the BJP did not believe in Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's principles and it was not possible to work with Netaji's vision because the BJP did not allow him. "What we are seeing today is communal hatred, division led by the BJP. This time, there is a fight to save India and stop this divisive politics. The time has come," Mr. Chandra Bose said.

He joined the Trinamool in the presence of senior leaders such as Bratya Basu and Kirti Azad.

His induction into the Trinamool comes at a crucial time just days ahead of the high-stakes Assembly election in West Bengal on April 23 and 29.

Mr. Bratya Basu, State Education Minister, said, "In the BJP's language, this is *ghar wapsi*. A secular person has returned to a secular place."

'Ideological differences'

Mr. Chandra Bose contested the 2019 Lok Sabha election on BJP ticket from Rashbehari. He had joined the BJP in 2016 and parted ways with it in 2023 over "ideological differences". Since then, on multiple occasions, he had been vocal about his disagreements with the BJP ideology.

After the publication of the voter list in Bengal, Mr. Chandra Bose, on his social media handle, asked why the civil society of the State was not protesting against the exclusion of 90 lakh voters. He also questioned the role of the Election Commission, and accused it of failing to stay "free and fair" ahead of the election.

Earlier, the late Krishna Bose and her son and historian Sugata Bose had represented the Trinamool in Parliament. Both of them are members of the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose family.

CARTOONSCAPE | MIKA AZIZ

DMK govt. has made Tamil Nadu the top State in corruption: Nitin Nabin

The DMK and Congress are pushing Tamil Nadu into a state of poverty through corruption, says the BJP national president during a public meeting in Ramanathapuram Assembly constituency; he targets the ruling party in T.N. over remarks on *Sanatana Dharma*, alleges graft through job scams

CAMPAIGN TRAIL

The Hindu Bureau
RAMANATHAPURAM

BJP national president Nitin Nabin on Sunday accused the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam government in Tamil Nadu of "prioritising the exploitation of the resources of the poor over actual development of the State". He was addressing a public meeting in front of the Ramanathapuram Palace in support of the BJP's candidate for the Ramanathapuram constituency, 'GBS' K. Nagendran.

"The DMK and Congress are pushing Tamil Nadu into a state of poverty through corruption. Once an NDA government is established in Tamil Nadu, it will put an end to the drug culture in the State," he said.

He said the current Ramanathapuram MLA had encouraged corruption and drug culture in the district. "The Union government is building houses for the poor across the country. The DMK government has built up a debt of ₹10 lakh crore. People must ask whether they used this money to build houses or roads," he said.

Targeting the DMK over the law and order situation, he said the State government had failed to act even as more than 8,900 people were murdered in Tamil Nadu.

Illicit liquor deaths

Recalling deaths in Kallakurichi district due to the consumption of illicit liquor, he charged that Chief Minister M.K. Stalin did not even go there to offer condolences to the 68 families who lost their kin. On the Thiruparankundram row, he said, "Despite the High Court's order, the Tamil Nadu government did not allow the lighting of the lamp atop the Thiruparankundram hill. To punish the DMK government for this, you must vote for the NDA on April 23. When Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin spoke against *Sanatana Dharma*, senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi did not condemn it. In Tamil Nadu, Rameswaram and the Madurai Meenakshi Amman Temple are sacred lands. But the DMK government speaks mockingly of *Sanatana Dharma*".

Mr. Nabin accused the DMK government of looting the money of the poor without worrying about the State's development. "It is turning Tamil Nadu into the number one state in corruption. Due to corruption, five lakh job opportunities have been blocked," he alleged. "They have engaged in corruption worth ₹5,000 crore through employment scams and tens of thousands of crores through TASMAC [the State liquor firm]." he noted.

Ground zero: BJP national president Nitin Nabin at a roadshow for BJP State president and Sattur candidate Nainar Nagenthran on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Pledging to bring an end to the "family rule" in Tamil Nadu, he stated that the government was working only for the family of Mr. Stalin.

"For a DMK worker, becoming the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister is a pipe dream. This family rule must be abolished. The DMK government should be thrown out on May 4. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has provided thousands of crores in funds for the development of Tamil Nadu. Specifically, he provided ₹4,000 crore for Madurai and around ₹5,000 crore for Tiruchi. If you vote for the NDA, Tamil Nadu will be taken along the path of progress," he claimed.

Importance will be given to Rameswaram just like Kashi, he stated, while adding, "The holy waters of Rameswaram's Agni Theertham are being contaminated with sewage."

By not properly implementing the Jal Jeevan scheme, the DMK government had committed irregularities, which had made clean drinking water a distant dream in the district. "During the Iran war, the Prime Minister rescued over 700 of our fishermen, including 50 from Ramanathapuram district who were stranded in Iran. Our Prime Minister protects not only the people of the country but also the people outside the country," he added.

BJP's election co-incharge for Tamil Nadu Sudhakar Reddy, BJP national general council member and actor R. Sarath Kumar, and BJP district president Muralidharan, among others, were present.

Warm welcome

Mr. Nabin also hit the roads in Sattur town in Virudhunagar district seeking votes for the party's State president and Sattur candidate Nainar Nagenthran. Mr. Nabin began his roadshow from Madurai Road, along with Mr. Nagenthran and Mr. Sarath Kumar. The vehicle wound through the arterial roads, passing by the bus stand and taluk office, before concluding at Mukkuranthal.

Mr. Nabin displayed the 'Lotus' symbol and waved at the crowd of BJP cadre and workers of alliance parties.

The crowd gave a warm welcome to the BJP national president by showering petals. The roadshow went on for around 30 minutes.

Bengal CM says BJP plans to divide State using delimitation

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee alleged on Sunday that the Bharatiya Janata Party government at the Centre wanted to carry out a delimitation exercise to trifurcate the State and change the demographic and geographical composition of the province.

Mamata Banerjee

"Through delimitation, they might merge some districts of Bengal with Bihar and Odisha. People will face even more suffering. Our government will not allow the formation of detention camps," Ms. Banerjee said during a public rally in Bankura. She added that the people of Bengal are likely to face major hardships if the BJP is voted to power.

Decisive moment

She positioned the election as a decisive moment in Bengal politics calling it a "do-or-die" situation, which will decide the fate of the State.

She alleged that the BJP had struck a ₹1,000-crore deal (with Trinamool Congress defector Humayun Kabir) to conspire and overthrow the Trinamool government in the State. Her comments are in reference to an alleged viral video of the Aam Janata Unnayan Party chief. According to the Trinamool, the leader was seen making a deal with the BJP to mislead Muslims in the State.

At another rally on Sunday, at Khandaghosh in Purba Bardhaman, she sharpened her criticism of the wrongful deletions of voters, and said that it was part of a broader political move by the BJP, which was trying to introduce the National Register for Citizens (NRC) via the backdoor, and said that it would leave people without "identity, land or household".

She warned voters about vote tampering, and asked people to stay vigilant, and to check EVMs for foul play before casting their votes.

All the BJP candidates in Bengal Assembly polls are Modi: PM in Siliguri rally

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Taking a leaf out of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's campaign book, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that all Bharatiya Janata Party candidates contesting the Assembly election were "Modi".

"You all are Modi for me. All these candidates are also Modi. In the past 70 years, you gave everyone a chance, you gave the Congress a chance, you gave the Trinamool a chance. Now give Modi a chance," the Prime Minister said at a public meeting at Siliguri in Darjeeling district.

BJP candidates contesting the polls from Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Jalpaiguri districts were present during his address. The Prime Minister asked them to present themselves on the stage and urged people to vote for them.

During her campaign, Ms. Banerjee has stated in several rallies that "she is the Trinamool candidate for all the 294 seats" and that the people should vote thinking about her and not the individual candidates.

Canvassing for votes: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other BJP leaders during a public meeting in Siliguri on Sunday. PTI

The Prime Minister at public rallies on Sunday appealed to voters to give "one chance to Modi for the safety of Bengal's daughters, one chance to Modi to protect Bengal from infiltration, one chance to Modi to ensure that Bengal's youth get jobs within Bengal itself, and one chance to Modi to bring back industries".

Strategic importance

Emphasising the strategic importance of the Siliguri Corridor, the Prime Minister said that Trinamool supports the "*tukde-tukde*" gang (people who want to break India) that had threatened to snap the strategic corridor to cut off Northeast India from the rest of the country.

"For the BJP, the Siliguri Corridor is the corridor of security and prosperity of the country. We are constantly trying for its development," Mr. Modi told the rally.

The Prime Minister alleged that the Trinamool has deliberately kept north Bengal behind and raised the issue of devastation caused by floods in the region last year.

Mr. Modi also targeted the Trinamool for "appeasement policies" and said that these policies were causing major demographic changes in the region.

"It will be too late if the infiltration menace is not stopped right away," the Prime Minister said, coining a new slogan –"*Kamal khilao, ghuspetia bhagao*" (Vote for lotus and drive infiltrators away).

BJP will bring inclusive govt. in Bengal, says Adityanath

Press Trust of India
SONAMUKHI

Accusing the Trinamool Congress of pursuing appeasement policies in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday urged people to vote for a "double-engine" government here to bring in "a truly inclusive regime".

Addressing a rally at Sonamukhi in Bankura district, Mr. Adityanath said Bengal was known as the land of Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna, who enriched the country's spiritual quest.

"But the Trinamool government disrespects spiritual icons," he alleged. "Bengal has now become the place of '*goonda gardi*', which was common in Uttar Pradesh nine-to-10 years back before the BJP came to power there. But see the changes now," he added.

He said there was no appeasement in Uttar Pradesh, but "inclusive Hinduism", where every community can live peacefully in a secure environment. During the Trinamool regime, demographic changes had taken place in Bengal because of infiltration. "The BJP will protect the State's identity and safeguard its inclusive character," he said.

INBRIEF

Jaishankar discusses West Asia crisis with UAE President

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met the President of the United Arab Emirates, Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, on Sunday, and discussed the West Asia crisis and its economic impact. Mr. Jaishankar was on a two-day visit to the Gulf nation, which began on Saturday. "Conveyed warm greetings of Prime Minister @narendramodi and our gratitude for ensuring well-being of the Indian community during the West Asia conflict," Mr. Jaishankar said on social media after the meeting in Abu Dhabi. The Minister also said he thanked Al Nahyan for his guidance on further strengthening the India-UAE comprehensive strategic partnership. PTI

Amarnath Yatra to begin from July 3; registrations from 15th

The annual pilgrimage to the holy cave shrine of Amarnath in south Kashmir will commence on July 3 and conclude after 57 days on August 28, Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha told reporters at the Lok Bhavan in Jammu. Pilgrims between the ages of 13 and 70 can undertake the yatra and registrations will begin from April 15. The dates for the yatra were decided at a meeting of the Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board (SASB) under the chairmanship of Mr. Sinha. Registration for the pilgrimage has been made mandatory and will begin from April 15. The minimum age for pilgrims has been fixed at 13 years and the maximum at 70 years, he said. PTI

RSS and BJP's main aim is to finish off Constitution: Rahul

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi launched a scathing attack on the RSS-BJP on Sunday, alleging their main objective is to finish off the Constitution because they don't want that everyone in India is considered an equal. Mr. Gandhi made the remarks before flagging off the 'Run For Ambedkar, Run For Constitution' marathon in Delhi, ahead of Ambedkar's birth anniversary on April 14. "Whatever they (RSS-BJP) do, they even bow before Ambedkar ji's statue, but their objective is to finish off the Constitution. Our objective is to protect the Constitution and strengthen the Constitution," the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha said. PTI

83% turnout recorded in Tripura tribal council polls

Around 83% of the 9.62 lakh voters exercised their franchise in the elections to the 28-member Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council on Sunday. Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha, Tipra Motha founder Pradyot Kishore Manikya and CPI(M) State Secretary Jitendra Chowdhury led a high-voltage campaign for their party candidates. The State Election Commission and the police administration described the voting as "by and large" peaceful. However, there were reports of injuries as members of rival parties clashed, lobbed bombs and attacked vehicles in different locations. Security forces were deployed in strength in sensitive areas.

Bold, energetic voice of modern India

Asha Bhosle's voice — down-to-earth, lively, full of emotion — marked the rise of a more confident, worldly, self-aware portrayal of women in cinema; legendary artist will be remembered for fearless spirit, versatility, playful charm with a timbre that easily switched from restraint to raw sensuality

Anuj Kumar

An artist of extraordinary range and emotional colour, Asha Bhosle breathed her last on Sunday. She is survived by her son, Anand, and a fan base spread over three generations.

Forever young, Asha's voice helped define a major cultural shift in post-Independence India, the rise of a more confident, worldly, and self-aware portrayal of women in Indian cinema. While her sister Lata Mangeshkar often represented an idealised, and almost unreal, femininity, Asha's singing was more down-to-earth, lively, full of emotion, and open about expressing desire.

She could shift in a single phrase from classical restraint to raw sensuality, or from playful irony to devastating melancholy.

From O.P. Nayyar's gently inviting *Aaiye Meherbaan* (*Howrah Bridge*, 1958), to R.D. Burman's psychedelic, counter-culture anthem *Dum Maro Dum* (*Hare Ram Hare Krishna*, 1971), and A.R. Rahman's lively *Rangeela Re* (*Rangeela*, 1995), Asha's rebellious *joie de vivre* remained irrepressible for generations.

In parallel, the Padma Vibhushan awardee collaborated with Ustad Ali Akbar Khan and lent her intellectually agile voice to Ravi's *Tora Man Darpan Kehlaye* (*Kaajal*, 1965), Burman's *Piya Bawri* (*Khoobsurat*), and Khayyam's *Dil Cheez Kya Hai* (*Umrao Jaan*, 1981) – the pinnacle of her classical and dramatic range.

Born Asha Mangeshkar into the illustrious musical family of Dinanath Mangeshkar in Sangli, she started singing at age 10 with a Marathi number.

After a decade of struggle, she became the voice of children in *Nanhe Munne Bachche Teri Muthi Main Kya Hai* (*Boot Polish*).

Her breakthrough came with *Uden Jab Jab Zulfein Teri* and *Maang Ke Saath Tumhara*. These foot-tapping numbers, composed by Nayyar for B.R. Chopra's *Naya Daur* (1957), showcased Asha's breezy and rhythmically sharp voice. Her style contrasted perfectly with Rafi's robust approach, ushering Asha in as a new sensation in playback singing.

Capable of shifting registers and emotional colours with startling ease, she never imposed a single "Asha sound". Instead, she studied the actor, the character, the era, and the director's vision, then delivered a voice that felt *owned* by that performer. She made Zeenat Aman sound unapologetically sensual, Rekha poetic, and Urmila Matondkar and Kajol effervescent.

Distinct, versatile artist

She grew up in the shadow of her elder sister Lata yet forged an utterly distinct artistic identity. A teenage marriage to Ganpatrao Bhosle that ended in separation, the need to support herself and her children through singing, and the industry's initial tendency to typecast the younger Mangeshkar sister, Asha's early life was a struggle.

But she never lost faith in the name that her legendary father gave her. She had to do something that her illustrious *didi* would not try. Though she hailed from a classical tradition, she had an interest in Western music since childhood.

She liked the fusion of Spanish, American, and Indian tunes and composers like Nayyar and Pancham (R.D. Burman), who played an important role in helping her find her niche, and realised that she could bring the elements of Hindustani music into western compositions with ease.

She emerged on the scene when Lata, Shamshad Begum, and Geeta Dutt were the top three.

Her ambition and will to experiment, combined with circumstances, proved that she bridged the gap in no time. *Howrah Bridge* also had Geeta Dutt's *Mera Naam Chin Chin Choo*, but *Aiye Meherbaan* lasted longer in the collective memory of the young at heart. Her breath control in *Raat Akeli Hai* (*Jewel Thief*, 1967) won her the nod of the demanding S.D. Burman.

Earlier, the composer's misunderstanding with Lata gave Asha the opportunity to sing songs like *Kali Ghata Chhayi* (*Sujata*, 1959), and she proved that, given an opportunity, she was no less sweet than her iconic sister.

There was a time when she became the voice of the vamp and the other woman with songs like *O Haseena Zulfon Wali* (*Teesri Manzil*), *Piya Tu Ab To Aaja* (*Caravan*), and *Yeh Mera Dil* (*Don*). It allowed her to explore the hitherto forbidden spaces for a playback singer. She employed her incredulous breath control as an expressive tool, and in cabaret and seductive numbers, controlled inhalations and micro-pauses became part of the performance.

Waves of change

However, every time she seemed stuck to an image, Asha smashed it. "I have only one image, and that is of a versatile singer," she once told this journalist.

In the early 80s, when her *Jawani Janeman* (*Namak Halal*) for Bappi Lahiri was ruling the pubs, she surprised with her mastery of Urdu tradition with *Umrao Jaan*.

After a flurry of Filmfare awards, *Umraon Jaan* and *Ijaazat* won her the national awards. The period marked her journey into ghazals through collaborations with Ghulam Ali, Jagjit Singh, and Hariharan. It was around the same time that she started a long collaboration with Ilaiyaraaja. Starting with *Sadma*, she saw his unusual rhythm patterns as a challenge, and their magic in *Shenbagamae Shenbagame* (*Enga Ooru Paattukkaaran*, 1987) has withstood the test of time. She has a rich repertoire of songs in Marathi, Bengali, Malayalam, and Gujarati.

She endured personal tragedies – the separation from her first husband, the loss of Pancham, and the suicide of her daughter Varsha – with a stoic dignity that mirrored the resilience, and occasional lament in her singing, such as in *Chain Se Humko Kabhie Aapne Jeene Na Diya* (*Pran Jaye Par Vachan Na Jaye*).

Be it *Le Gayi Le Gayi* (*Dil To Pagal Hai*), Lagaan's *Radha Kaise Na Jale*, *Kambakht Ishq*, or *Prem Mein Tohre* (*Begum Jaan*, 2017), the Dadasaheb Phalke winner's voice withstood the waves of change as she continued to create chartbusters for the reigning divas well into the new millennium, and her live performances continued till 2024 when she performed *Tauba Tauba* in a concert in Dubai.

Asha's voice felt like a friend, a co-conspirator, or a mirror – someone who had been through the messiness of life and still chose to sing, dance, and seduce with full-throated joy. No wonder the industry still repurposes *Monica, O My Darling* in the background for its *Dhurandhar* to fly. As Shahryar, the poet-lyricist of Umrao Jaan, would say, "*Is anjuman main aapko aana hai bar bar...*" Asha never fades.

Glorious journey

Born on September 8, 1933 in Sangli, Asha Bhosle was trained in classical music by her father, Dinanath Mangeshkar

- She grew up in a deeply musical family with her siblings Lata Mangeshkar and Usha (singers), and Meena and Hridaynath (composers)
- Asha Bhosle married Ganpatrao Bhosle in 1949 when she was just 16. She later married composer R.D. Burman
- She recorded her first song at just 10 after her father's death. It was the Marathi song *Chala Chala Nav Bala* for *Majha Bal* in 1943
- The breakthrough came in the 1950s, especially through collaborations with O.P. Nayyar
- Her collaboration with R.D. Burman redefined Hindi film music in the 1960s and 1970s

Her Hindi film debut came with the song *Sawan Aaya* in *Chunariya* (1948)

CHARTBUSTERS

- ***Abhi Na Jao Chhod Kar*** *(Hum Dono, 1961)*: A tender duet with Mohammed Rafi, this song captures romantic hesitation with delicacy. Its conversational rhythms made it one of Hindi cinema's most beloved love songs
- ***Aaja Aaja Main Hoon Pyar Tera*** *(Teesri Manzil, 1966)*: A burst of rock-and-roll energy, this R.D. Burman composition pushed playback singing into Western territory. Bhosle reportedly rehearsed extensively to match its breathless tempo
- ***Piya Tu Ab To Aaja*** *(Caravan, 1971)*: Sultry, playful, and iconic for its "Monica, O My Darling" refrain, this track redefined the cabaret song and cemented Bhosle's image as Hindi cinema's most daring voice
- ***Dum Maro Dum*** (*Hare Rama Hare Krishna, 1971*): A counterculture anthem that captured the hippie zeitgeist in India. Its rebellious tone gave Bhosle a new generational audience
- ***Chura Liya Hai Tumne Jo Dil Ko*** *(Yaadon Ki Baaraat, 1973)*: This timeless classic remains one of Bollywood's most enduring love songs
- ***Yeh Mera Dil*** *(Don, 1978)*: An energetic song that paired Bhosle's voice with Helen's screen presence
- ***In Aankhon Ki Masti*** *(Umrao Jaan, 1981)*: A masterclass in ghazal *gayaki*, it earned Bhosle a National Award and showcased her command over classical nuance
- ***Mera Kuch Samaan*** *(Ijaazat, 1987)*: Minimalist and haunting, this Gulzar composition broke conventional song structure
- ***Rangeela Re*** *(Rangeela, 1995)*: A reminder of Bhosle's longevity, well into her 60s, she adapted seamlessly to A.R. Rahman's modern soundscape with a youthful flair
- ***Radha Kaise Na Jale*** *(Lagaan, 2001)*: This semi-classical piece brought Bhosle's voice to a new millennium audience, bridging generations effortlessly
- She collaborated with Boy George and Adnan Sami
- In 2011, Bhosle's name was registered in the Guinness World Records for recording the most number of studio recordings in the history of music. She recorded nearly 12,000 songs in 20 languages

ACHIEVEMENTS

- **2000: Dadasaheb Phalke Award**
- **2008: Padma Vibhushan**
- Asha Bhosle was nominated for the **Grammy Awards in 1977** for her collaboration with Ustad Ali Akbar Khan for the album *Legacy*. **In 2005,** another album, *You've Stolen My Heart* by Kronos Quartet, comprising of arrangements of composer R.D. Burman and Asha, was nominated for the **Grammy**

> From my side, it has always been a relationship of admiration and awe. She was truly iconic; there has never been another singer as versatile as her
>
> **USHA UTHUP**

> She has made many of my songs so popular with her unique voice and style. I had a very special relationship with both Lataji and Ashaji
>
> **HEMA MALINI**

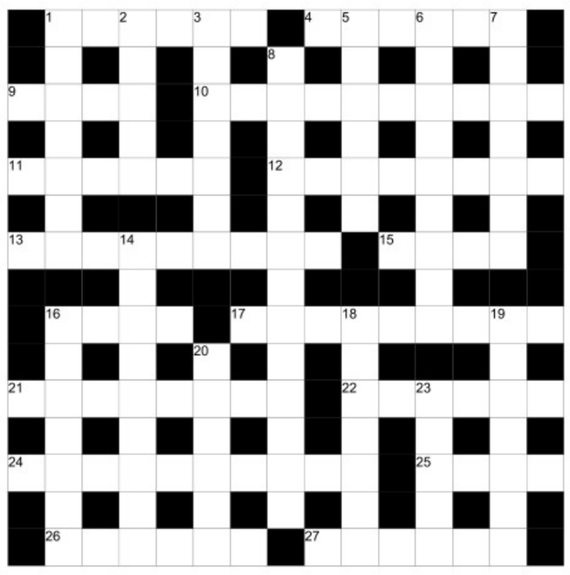
> Today, words feel too small for the loss we feel. One moment, the heart falls silent, and the next, it drifts through the countless melodies she gifted all of us
>
> **SACHIN TENDULKAR**

CROSSWORD + 14766

(set by Hypatia)

Solve this puzzle online and access more puzzles at *https://thehindu.com/crosswords*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1. Possible to say, trade in scrap (6)
4. Bird herding two tailless animals (6)
9. Fervent cry (4)
10. Complain about broken locks? (5,5)
11. Associate litigation relating to a court (6)
12. Spooner's bag hit chair behind the driver (4,4)
13. Agatha Christie novels and plays with sound (9)
15. Basically headgear - also topis sometimes (4)
16. Hard to take over in, say, Kohli's steps (4)
17. Herb's running after terrible game (9)
21. Activate new TiVo to entertain couple (8)
22. Country dividing drug and alcohol (6)
24. Charming food shop's extremely garish bar's nearly crowded (10)
25. Has topless dresses (4)
26. Without consuming drugs, model's most balanced (6)
27. Peacekeeper's soldiers taking a line that's imaginary (6)

Down

1. Spotted cat that's reportedly a rogue (7)
2. Sacred bull treasured by Pakistan and India (5)
3. Reverse speech impediment in time for character in Greece (7)
5. A small increase in uniform cost, ultimately included in selection (6)
6. Snake was pickled in can for sailor (9)
7. Frequently use that in really round ropes (7)
8. Anything goes in Easter ball (3,4,3,3)
14. Registered ardent interest primarily in rare and ethnic group (9)
16. Merchants following Government's rule score unexpectedly (7)
18. Sentimental old lady, underrated, discontented about nothing (7)
19. Spoken without sound for a second, say (7)
20. Oddly, Bhatt shoots for anticlimax (6)
23. Chiefly aloft, beyond or vertically elevated! (5)

SUDOKU

							7	9
		7	2				6	
4			9	3				
9				4			5	3
3	6			7				1
				9	1			8
	5				4	1		
7	3							

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

No.SS6849 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

Solution to previous puzzle

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

6	4	5	3	2	9	8	1	7
1	8	3	7	6	4	2	9	5
9	2	7	1	5	8	6	4	3
2	1	9	8	7	3	5	6	4
4	7	8	5	1	6	3	2	9
5	3	6	9	4	2	1	7	8
8	5	2	6	9	7	4	3	1
3	9	4	2	8	1	7	5	6
7	6	1	4	3	5	9	8	2

FAITH

The greatness of Ramayana

Srimad Ramayana is regarded as the foremost among epics and is described as the *Adi Kavya* (the first poetic work). Emerging from the essence of the Vedas, it serves as a guiding model for all later literary works. More importantly, it explains numerous principles of dharma. In his discourse, Navalpakkam Sri Vasudevachariar quotes the famous verse *Vedavedye Pare Pumsi*, emphasising that the Ramayana is in complete harmony with the teachings of the Vedas. It reflects and upholds the values laid down in them. The life, conduct, and actions of Rama demonstrate how Vedic principles are to be put into practice in real life. The teachings found in the Ramayana are essentially the same as those described in the Vedas. Since Lord Narayana incarnated as Rama, the Ramayana itself can be seen as the embodiment of the Vedas. Both the Vedas and the Ramayana strongly emphasise righteousness (dharma) and the concept of *saranagati* (complete surrender).

The Ramayana presents several examples of *saranagati*, including the surrender of the Devas, Lakshmana, Vibhishana, Kakasura and Bharata. The Devas (celestial beings) surrendered to Lord Vishnu, seeking protection from the demon Ravana. Here, Vishnu is portrayed as *Sarvaloka Saranya* – the ultimate refuge of all beings – and as the compassionate one who grants *moksha* (liberation). Before the Ramayana war, the Devas again sought divine protection, and the Lord assured them safety through the gesture of *Abhaya Hasta* (the hand of protection and fearlessness). The marriage of Rama and Sita is not merely a union but a foundational event that establishes protection and fearlessness (*Abhaya Pradana)* for all beings.

No, life insurance isn't like fixed deposit

COVERNOTE

K. Nitya Kalyani

In the previous instalment of CoverNote we saw an idea of what constitutes mis-selling. How does it happen? How do you get mis-led about the nature and suitability of an insurance policy?

Insurance spells safety. A policy's features contribute to providing you security. It will also have some features you have to be aware of before you buy. When those are understated, not clarified, or even hidden from you or misrepresented, it makes the product sound safer than it is and lulls you into the purchase.

The mis-selling sales pitch is tuned to make an insurance policy sound benign, simple and more advantageous than it is.

Common and vintage tactics to mis-sell start with describing a life insurance policy as 'like a fixed deposit'. It isn't and cannot be. Many life policies are sold as offering 'guaranteed' returns. Some returns may be guaranteed under some policies, but many are declared year to year and are dependent on various terms and conditions.

Cousins of the guaranteed return are the minimum return and the assured addition. They may apply only to part of the proceeds of the policy while others are variable and optional.

Another ploy is to position the mandatory illustrative benefits as guaranteed. The difference between the two will be clearly printed in the policy brochure and you should ensure you ask for it apart from hearing the oral pitch which can be misleading.

Unit-linked insurance policies (ULIPs)are sold as high return policies and better than mutual funds as they come with life coverage. The high returns are a possibility indeed, as are low returns or losses! As for their comparison with mutual funds, please ask for a comparable fund option and check for yourself what the charges are on the ULIP and on the mutual fund.

Selling a regular premium policy as a single premium has become the saddest and most laughable kind of mis-selling. And then there is pressure sales of insurance as a tax-saver. Yes, that same one you were subjected to all of last month!

More serious cases involve underplaying facts that are material to the policy and its coverage. Let us say you declare a pre-existing disease (PED). The agent may persuade you to avoid this since coverage would be difficult or premium would be higher. Or you may make it easy for him, like many do,by signing a blank proposal form that he can complete ethically or unethically.

There are sinister cases where signatures have been forged on cleaned up versions of proposal forms and even fake lab test reports showing safe blood glucose levels and normal ECGs have been substituted to hide PEDs.

The proposal and its declarations are yours to live with and so are the claims denials that will haunt you later on. You can prevent this entirely by filling up your proposal form personally and retaining a photocopy. And there is a second chance to correct any error or mischief. When the insurance policy is issued to you, the company has to give you a copy of your proposal form. It is in your interest to check it at least then. The 15-day free-look period when you can return any policy and get a refund of premium is an opportunity to exit a bad deal. I would urge you strongly to be aware of it and be ready to use it if needed. Like many things in this world, for each unethical seller there are many more honest foot-soldiers in the insurance sales army. The sad news is that academic studies in marketing reveal that mis-sellers make more money, for themselves and their companies.

That was a sample of how mis-selling can happen. Let's go on to see why and what you can do to protect yourself as indeed the regulator's position.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

Sneaky disorder: Much like physical health, an outwardly comfortable lifestyle and generous spending can be deceptive. ILLUSTRATION: P. SAINATH

Diagnose financial health at home with these vitals

Just as blood tests and scans help in understanding physical health, a set of financial "vitals" can reveal the true state of one's fiscal well-being

FINOSIS SCORE

Vaishali R. Venkat

Often, we hear allopathic doctors say, "Numbers don't lie." Perhaps, those words hold true in a broad sense, though occasional hiccups, misleading readings, inaccuracies, or even false reports cannot be entirely ruled out. By and large, a routine health check-up, with scans and blood tests, offers valuable insight into our internal well-being, even if no report is entirely flawless. In contrast, physical appearances, however healthy we may seem on the outside, cannot always reveal hidden disorders or diseases.

Much like physical health, an outwardly comfortable lifestyle and generous spending can be deceptive, creating an illusion of prosperity while masking a far more fragile financial reality beneath.

This is precisely where a financial diagnostic tool becomes invaluable. Let us now step into the world of 'Finosis Score', where numbers begin to tell a deeper story. Unlike medical tests conducted in laboratories by professionals, the Finosis Score, a financial health check-up tracker, can be done individually at home by examining a few key parameters.

No single test can capture complete physical or mental well-being. Similarly, no single parameter can reflect overall financial health. Often, income, investments, and spending are only a trailer revealing just a slice of the story. The main picture emerges only from a set of underlying financial "vital" indicators that, together, reflect the true condition of one's financial life. With this in perspective, let's now learn how to diagnose our financial health...

> For ease of understanding, the term "Finosis," a portmanteau of 'financial' and 'diagnosis,' is being used to describe a financial health report

> The main picture emerges only from a set of underlying financial "vital" indicators that, together, reflect the true condition of one's financial life

For ease of understanding, the term "Finosis," a portmanteau of 'financial' and 'diagnosis,' is being used to describe a financial health report. Broadly, the Finosis Score can be understood through two dimensions: the external structure, reflecting what financial actions are taken, and the internal behaviour that explains why those actions are taken. Assigning scores to each of these dimensions leads to an overall Finosis Score, which can then be interpreted as a financial health report.

'Financial Scan'

The 'Financial Scan' draws attention to five crucial indicators that together shape the building blocks of one's financial profile. The parameters include: the burden of debt, the extent of risk protection through insurance coverage (health and term), the stability of income, the proportion of income set aside for investments, and the presence of a safety cushion, including owning a home and at least six months of emergency funds, to absorb unexpected shocks. Each of these elements does not operate in isolation; together, they shape whether financial strength is quietly built or gradually eroded.

For a simple self-check, each of these can be assigned a score on a scale of 0 to 10, based on how weak or strong it appears. For debt burden, inverse scoring applies: a lower burden reflects a higher health score.

In the case of risk protection, the score may be divided between health and term insurance, with up to five marks assigned to each. Similarly, for the safety cushion, the score may be divided between emergency savings and owning a home, with up to five marks assigned to each. Adding these scores offers a quick sense of where your financial strength stands and where it may need attention. Even a quick attempt at this 50-point exercise can reveal surprising gaps or strengths in one's financial position.

'Behavioural Pulse'

The 'Behavioural Pulse' captures the hidden, often overlooked side of financial health. The five parameters include: impulse control in spending, the awareness of money flows, the fear of losing income, the fear of the future, and the effort devoted to skill development, which is the preventative medicine that keeps your income stability immune to market decay. Each of these may be assigned a score on a scale of 0 to 10. For the fear of income loss and the future, the scoring is reversed: the less fear you have, the higher your health score and vice versa.

This internal 50-point score offers a quick sense of whether one's financial behaviour is strengthening financial stability or quietly digging one's own financial grave. While the 'Financial Scan' reveals the visible picture, the 'Behavioural Pulse' determines how that picture evolves over a period of time. Therefore, neither can be ignored at the expense of the other.

Now that marks have been carefully assigned to all, the combined score, out of 100, acts as a mirror to overall financial health.

(The writer is an NISM & CRISIL-certified Wealth Manager and certified in NISM's Research Analyst module)

Why SIPs on individual stocks?

THINKINVESTOR

You can choose the stocks you want to buy for your portfolio and you can also sell them whenever you want

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

Fundamental analysis is best left to professional analysts. An analyst tracking, say, the automobile sector, forecasts cash flows of each company in the sector and determines its stock value. You and I cannot replicate this work as individual investors, as we cannot have in-depth understanding of all companies across sectors if we were to create a multi-sector portfolio. Professional money managers use analyst reports to create portfolios. That means it is optimal to invest in mutual funds if you prefer active products. Yet, many individuals prefer to buy individual stocks through systematic investment plans (SIP). In this article, we discuss a behavioural reason that can explain this preference.

One argument in favour of buying individual stocks instead of mutual funds is that you can choose the stocks you want to buy for your portfolio. An extension of this argument is that you can also sell the stocks whenever you want. But this argument suffers from illusion of control. Why? Whether you buy individual stocks or units in a mutual fund, you can sell your investments whenever you want to. As for the argument about picking stocks, the idea of investing in a mutual fund is that the professional money managers understand the market much better than us.

But what if you have ideological differences with a fund's investment philosophy? Suppose you do not want to take exposure to companies that manufacture tobacco and alcohol. Or your religious practices do not allow you to invest in certain types of companies, say, banks. You can select funds that fit with your ideologies. ESG-focused funds and Shariah funds, for instance. The point is that there are funds today that meet most of your requirements. While choosing active funds is not easy, neither is selecting individual stocks to invest for your goal-based investments.

The urge to own individual stocks may be difficult to overcome. This behaviour is like the desire to own physical gold instead of financial gold. One way to moderate this desire is to yield to temptation. Select a few stocks that you want to buy and invest only a modest amount in them. This should preferably be a one-time investment, not an SIP. Your SIPs for your goal-based investments must be primarily in ETFs or in active funds. What if you already have several SIPs on individual stocks? You may have to gradually shift your SIPs to ETFs or mutual funds of your choice.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Personal Loans

Rates and Charges | Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years | Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure 5 years | (% of loan amount)

Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
HDFC Bank	9.99 onwards	10,621 onwards	2,124 onwards	Up to Rs 6,500
Tata Capital	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 5%
State Bank of India	10.00-15.00	10,624-11,895	2,125-2,379	Up to 1.50% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 15,000)
ICICI Bank	9.99 onwards	10,621 onwards	2,124 onwards	Up to 2%
Bank of Baroda*	10.15-18.00	10,660-12,697	2,132-2,539	Up to 2% (Max. Rs 10,000)
Axis Bank	9.50 onwards	10,501 onwards	2,100 onwards	Up to 2%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 5%
Bank of India	10.85-16.15	10,834-12,199	2,167-2,440	Up to 1% (Min. Rs 250; Max. Rs 15,000)
Canara Bank	9.70-15.15	10,550-11,934	2,110-2,387	0.50% (Rs 1,000 - Rs 5,000)
Punjab National Bank	10.25-16.80	10,685-12,373	2,137-2,475	Up to 1%
HSBC Bank	9.75 onwards	10,562 onwards	2,112 onwards	Up to 2%
Federal Bank	11.75 - 18.99	11,059 - 12,968	2,212 - 2,594	Up to 3%
Union Bank of India	8.75 - 12.55	10,319-11,262	2,064-2,252	Up to 1% (Max. Rs 7,500)
Bajaj Finserv	10.00-30.00	10,624-16,177	2,125-3,235	Up to 3.93%
Punjab & Sind Bank	9.60-13.85	10,525-11,595	2,105-2,319	0.50%-1%
Indian Overseas Bank	10.25 onwards	10,685 onwards	2,137 onwards	Up to 0.75%
UCO Bank	9.95 - 13.20	10,611-11,428	2,122-2,286	Up to 1% (Min. Rs 750)
IDFC FIRST Bank	9.99 onwards	10,621 onwards	2,124 onwards	Up to 3.5%
Bank of Maharashtra	8.75-13.55	10,319-11,518	2,064-2,304	Up to 1% (Max. Rs 10,000)
Central Bank of India	9.85-11.65	10,587-11,034	2,117-2,207	Up to 1%
IndusInd Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to 3.5% (2% for instant personal loans for limited period)

*Interest concession of 0.10% to customers opting for group credit life insurance

Car Loans

Rates and Charges | Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years | (% of loan amount)

Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
Union Bank of India	7.40-9.45	9,995 - 10,489	Up to Rs 1,000
Punjab National Bank	7.60-10.70	10,043 - 10,797	Up to 0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 1,500)
Bank of Baroda	7.60 - 11.35	10,043 - 10,959	Up to Rs. 2,000
Canara Bank	7.45-11.45	10,007 - 10,984	0.25% (Rs 1,000 - Rs 5,000)
Bank of India	7.60-12.55	10,043 - 11,262	Up to 0.25% (Rs. 2,500 - Rs. 10,000)
UCO Bank	7.35-10.00	9,983 - 10,624	0.5% (Max. Rs 5,000)
State Bank of India	8.70 - 9.85	10,355 - 10,587	Rs 750 - Rs 1,500
IDBI Bank	7.75-9.40	10,078 - 10,477	Rs 2,500
Bank of Maharashtra*	7.45-11.75	10,007 - 11,059	NIL
Indian Overseas Bank	7.55-12.00	10,031 - 11,122	NIL
ICICI Bank	8.50 onwards	10,258 onwards	Up to 2%
HDFC Bank	8.15 onwards	10,174 onwards	Up to 0.5% (Rs. 3,500 - Rs. 8,000)
Karnataka Bank	8.01-11.51	10,141 - 10,999	Up to 0.60% (Rs. 2,500 - Rs. 11,000)
Punjab and Sind Bank**	7.50-14.00	10,019 - 11,634	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 15,000)
Indian Bank	7.50-9.65	10,019 - 10,513	Rs. 1,200
IDFC FIRST Bank	9.99 onwards	10,621 onwards	Up to Rs. 10,000
Central Bank of India	7.60-9.20	10,043 - 10,428	No processing fees till 31.03.2026

*0.25% interest concession for home loan borrowers, existing customers with at least 6 months relationship with bank
**Concession of up to 50% on processing fee for PSB Apna Vahan Sugam.

Rates and charges as on April 8 **Source: Paisabazaar.com**

JERUSALEM

Israel's Ben-Gvir visits flashpoint Al-Aqsa Mosque compound

AFP

Israel's far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir visited the flashpoint Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem on Sunday, saying he was seeking greater access for Jewish worshippers. The Jordanian Foreign Ministry said it considered Mr. Ben-Gvir's visit to be a violation of the status quo agreement. REUTERS

BEIJING

China 'to boost Taiwan exchanges' as Opposition leader ends visit

AFP

China will implement a series of measures to enhance exchanges with Taiwan, Beijing said on Sunday on the final day of a rare visit by Kuomintang (KMT) chairperson Cheng Li-wun. Beijing released a list of 10 measures to "promote the peaceful development of cross-strait relations", *Xinhua* said. AFP

BEIRUT

UN force in Lebanon says Israeli tank rammed its vehicles in south

AFP

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) said that an Israeli tank rammed peacekeeping vehicles on Sunday in the country's south. "On two occasions today, Israel Defence Forces (IDF) soldiers rammed UNIFIL vehicles with a Merkava tank, in one case causing significant damage," the statement said. AFP

BUDAPEST

Hungary decides in key election that could unseat Viktor Orban

REUTERS

Hungarians were casting ballots on Sunday in what is widely seen as Europe's most consequential election this year, a vote that could unseat populist Prime Minister Viktor Orban, an ally of U.S. President Donald Trump, after 16 years in power. Mr. Orban, 62, said the campaign had been "a great national moment on our side". AP

Ukraine, Russia trade barbs over Easter truce violations

Agence France-Presse
KHARKIV REGION

Prayer time: Chaplains pray with Ukrainian military members to celebrate Orthodox Easter in the Kharkiv region on Sunday. AFP

Ukraine and Russia accused each other on Sunday of violating a truce in place for Orthodox Easter thousands of times, as the war dragged through its fifth year.

Both sides had agreed to observe the ceasefire, which Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered on Thursday and which Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy proposed more than a week earlier.

But as with a similar agreement last year, only relative calm reigned along the 1,200-km front line.

"As of 7:00 am (0400 GMT) on 12 April, 2,299 ceasefire violations were recorded. Specifically: 28 enemy assault actions, 479 enemy shellings, 747 strikes by attack drones... and 1,045 strikes by FPV drones," the Ukrainian army said on Facebook.

Russia's Defence Ministry accused Kyiv of nearly 2,000 breaches of its own.

"A total of 1,971 ceasefire violations by units of the Ukrainian armed forces were recorded between 4:00 pm Moscow time on April 12 and 8:00 am on April 12," the Ministry said on the state-pushed MAX messenger.

The Russian Ministry claimed Kyiv had fired 258 times using artillery or tanks, carried out 1,329 FPV drone strikes, and dropped "various types of munitions" on 375 occasions, notably via drones.

Mr. Zelenskyy had called for a longer ceasefire in his evening address on Saturday, saying Ukraine had put the proposal to Russia. But in comments aired on Sunday, the Kremlin's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov rejected any extension unless the Ukrainian leader accepted Russia's "well-known" terms.

Trump threatens Strait of Hormuz blockade after U.S.-Iran talks end

Trump says Britain and a few other nations will join the blockade operation, contributing minesweepers; the move aims to take away Iran's key source of economic leverage; IRGC vows to 'deal severely' with any military movement through strait

Associated Press
Agence France-Presse
ISLAMABAD/WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday said the U.S. Navy would "immediately" begin a blockade to stop ships from entering or leaving the Strait of Hormuz, after U.S.-Iran peace talks in Pakistan ended without an agreement.

"Effective immediately, the United States Navy, the Finest in the World, will begin the process of BLOCKADING any and all Ships trying to enter, or leave, the Strait of Hormuz," Mr. Trump said on his Truth Social platform.

"Any Iranian who fires at us, or at peaceful vessels, will be BLOWN TO HELL!"

Iron fist: U.S. President Donald Trump gestures upon arrival at the Miami International Airport on Sunday. AFP

Mr. Trump initially suggested that "other countries" would be involved in the blockade effort, and then told *Fox News*' "Sunday Morning Futures with Maria Bartiromo" that Britain "and a couple of other countries" would be sending minesweepers.

Mr. Trump sought to exert strategic control over the waterway responsible for the transportation of 20% of global oil supplies before the war, hoping to take away Iran's key source of economic leverage in the fighting.

The President added that he has "instructed our Navy to seek and interdict every vessel in International Waters that has paid a toll to Iran. No one who pays an illegal toll will have safe passage on the high seas."

Mr. Trump also said the U.S. was ready to "finish up" Iran at the "appropriate moment," stressing that Tehran's nuclear ambitions were at the core of the failure to end the war.

He also threatened China with a massive 50% tariff on its goods entering the United States if it decides to help Tehran militarily.

Meanwhile, Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said on Sunday that his country would not give in to threats after Mr. Trump ordered a naval blockade.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards threatened to deal "severely" with any military vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz, state TV reported on Sunday, after the U.S. Central Command said two U.S. Navy warships had transited the strategic waterway to clear mines laid by Tehran.

"Any attempt by military vessels to pass through the Strait of Hormuz will be dealt with severely. The IRGC Navy has full authority to manage the Strait of Hormuz intelligently," the Guards' Navy Command said, according to state broadcaster *IRIB*, adding that passage through the strait would only be "granted to civilian vessels under specific conditions".

'Nepal PM Balendra Shah to visit India after bilateral mechanisms meeting'

The West Asia war has hit Nepal's remittance economy, says Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal; he confirms Prime Minister Balendra Shah has accepted invitation from Narendra Modi for India visit; new government will address India ties, he adds

INTERVIEW

Shisir Khanal

Suhasini Haidar
PORT LOUIS, MAURITIUS

As a landlocked and remittance-dependent country, Nepal has been particularly badly hit by the 39-day war in West Asia, Nepal's new Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal says. He says Nepal, as a South Asian neighbour, is happy that Pakistan led the effort for talks, which ended inconclusively in Islamabad on Sunday, adding that he hopes the ceasefire lasts. Confirming that Prime Minister Balendra Shah has accepted Narendra Modi's invitation to visit India, Mr. Khanal says that the new government will address ties with India in a structured manner, with bilateral mechanisms meeting before Mr. Shah's visit.

How badly has Nepal's economy been affected by the war in West Asia, and what kind of support are you hoping for from India?

Almost two million Nepalese work in Gulf region, in West Asia region, and we've seen the impact very directly, even though we're not party to the conflict. We've lost the life of one Nepal citizen and 27 have been injured. We're in direct conversation with the governments there to ensure the safety of our citizens.

Some of the global effects of the war, like fuel price increases will have a multiplier effect on Nepal's economy which is very remittance-dependent.
We're also anticipating challenges with fertilizer, especially since the rice planting season is coming up very soon. So the conflict keeps us awake at night.

What we had initially feared when the war broke out was the potential exodus of Nepalis returning back home, and fortunately, that hasn't happened. We hope the [U.S.-Iran] ceasefire will turn into lasting peace.

U.S.-Iran peace talks were held in South Asia. Have you been in touch with your Pakistani counterpart?

Our biggest hope is to see this truce lasting into longer term peace. The war's impact has not just been on a region, but it has had global impact. So it's good to see our Pakistani colleagues leading this truce and it is good to see South Asia on the map making global efforts. We've just taken the office, so we've not really had an engagement at a deeper level with anyone, except my first meeting was with India's Foreign Minister [S. Jaishankar] and other Foreign Ministers of Bhutan and Bangladesh who were here in Mauritius.

Do we expect a visit soon by Prime Minister Shah to Delhi?

Prime Minister Modi spoke with our leader even before we took office, and sent a congratulatory note and an invitation. Our Prime Minister has accepted the invitation, but the exact time of the visit will be made through bilateral mechanisms, at the time that is appropriate for both parties. Most importantly, when I was speaking with Dr. Jaishankar, what we discussed was that we need to define our priorities as a new government. There are 40 different mechanisms that India and Nepal currently collaborate on. So we want to first make sure that we're prioritising Nepal's needs. And after that, some technical visits would happen at MEA level. And following that, I think we expect to see political visits.

What do you see as the foreign policy of the new government, especially when it comes to issues that we have seen have become irritants in the past?

The broad foreign policy in Nepal, I think, will remain consistent in the sense that Nepal Constitution itself has identified territorial integrity, protecting sovereignty, and the United Nations charter. Nepal has had an independent foreign policy all along and non-alignment guides our foreign policy.

So from a broader foreign policy, I do not see any change. From our perspective, fast economic growth is our major priority. So that is where we want to really work with our neighbours.

Yours is the first Gen-Z government, that have some memories of the 2015 blockade and India-Nepal tensions since then on territorial and economic issues. What do you think needs to be done to put the past decade of troubled ties behind India and Nepal?

If India and Nepal were not neighbours, we would probably not have challenges and conflicts between the two countries. Conflict often happens with people who are closest to you, so I see that as a very natural process. But we have multiple mechanisms to deal with these challenges, and our priority would be to see that we have regular meetings, have conversations. When we meet and discuss, we can solve our differences very easily.

Given the last few months and the September 2025 violence and protests, will Nepal move towards a political reconciliation process with previous leaders of the country?

As a government, we have very clearly said that we're not going to take the path of vengeance. Nepal is a democracy and we have established our government through very democratic processes. So we will follow democratic norms, rule of laws, and conduct fair investigations, especially on the issues of corruption and money laundering. We promised this, not just in the last election, but when our party, the Rastriya Swatantra Party, was formed four years ago.

Dhaka to send 20-member delegation in China outreach

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Taking charge: Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman speaking during a parliamentary session in Dhaka. AFP

In its first outreach to China, the newly elected Bangladesh government will send a 20-member delegation to Beijing this month. The team, led by the general secretary of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Minister of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives, Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, will depart from Dhaka on April 16 and is expected to return on April 24.

The delegation includes Ismail Zabihullah, adviser to Prime Minister Tarique Rahman; popular singer Baby Nazneen; and Sanjida Tuly, the convener of the voluntary organisation Mayer Dak, who led the campaign demanding investigations into numerous cases of extrajudicial arrests and killings during Sheikh Hasina's tenure. The team also includes current BNP Member of Parliament and retired Air Vice Marshal Altaf Hossain Choudhury. The BNP delegation's visit is expected to be followed by a trip from Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman, who visited India from April 8 to 10.

One of the areas where Bangladesh-China relations have expanded in the past one and a half years is medical tourism, as lingering visa issues between India and Bangladesh have prompted Bangladeshi patients to seek treatment in Chinese hospitals in Kunming, which has air connectivity with Bangladesh. While details of the upcoming tour remain unavailable, it is understood that the Bangladeshi delegation will meet senior Chinese officials.

Apart from commercial ties, China is also involved in several major projects in Bangladesh, including the Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project, which aims to reduce flooding in the plains near northern West Bengal, including the strategically vital 'Siliguri Corridor'. The project is currently under technical evaluation, though there is an expectation that Teesta-related projects will be prioritised, as the BNP pledged to secure a "fair share" of the Teesta's waters from India in its February 2026 election manifesto.

With the fall of the Awami League government in August 2024, China intensified its outreach to the BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and the National Citizen Party (NCP). As part of this, China had sponsored a visit by five BNP members in June 2025.

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HARD TO BELIEVE

Bumrah goes wicketless for a fourth straight game in IPL 2026

EMMANUAL YOGINI

Mumbai Indians' pace ace Jasprit Bumrah went wicketless for a fourth consecutive match in IPL 2026, finishing with none for 35 against Royal Challengers Bengaluru. After not being able to figure in the wickets column against Kolkata Knight Riders, he also endured a barren spell against Delhi Capitals and Rajasthan Royals.

HAPPY SKIPPER

Rashid makes my life easy with the way he is bowling, says Gill

R.V. MOORTHY

The way we bowled in the PowerPlay was impressive, and we kept up the pressure in the middle overs. Rashid Khan makes my life easy with the way he is bowling. Back-to-back half-centuries for me and Jos Buttler, so I am very happy to be in form — Gujarat Titans captain Shubman Gill after the win against Lucknow Super Giants.

KEEPING THE FAITH

'We're not putting pressure on anyone, especially the seniors'

ANI

There were opportunities but we couldn't grab them. We have a great line-up, and the tournament has just started. We are not putting pressure on anyone, especially the senior guys. They know what they do. The trust is there in the camp — Lucknow Super Giants skipper Rishabh Pant after the loss to Gujarat Titans.

HAVING A CRACK

Shashank approached me and asked for an over, reveals Shreyas

SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

Punjab Kings captain Shreyas Iyer praised Shashank Singh for taking the initiative to rescue the team against Sunrisers Hyderabad. "Shashank approached me (after SRH scored 105 in the PowerPlay) and said: 'Give me an over.' I needed someone to take the pace off. He lived up to the expectations," said Shreyas.

RCB consigns MI to a third straight loss in a run-fest

Salt, Kohli, Patidar and David take the defending champion to 240 for four; the home team falls short despite Impact Player Rutherford's late charge; Krunal the pick of the bowlers for the visitors

IPL-19

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Phil Salt was sensational in the first half, Rajat Patidar was potent with his power-hitting in the middle overs and Tim David was devastating at the death. The trio's exploits helped Royal Challengers Bengaluru pile on a gargantuan 240 for four and eventually prevail over five-time champion Mumbai Indians by 18 runs in a marquee Indian Premier League clash at the Wankhede Stadium on Sunday.

Riding on a whirlwind batting display through the innings – despite Virat Kohli's relatively quiet 38-ball 50 – RCB lived up to its billing as defending champion to post the second-highest total of the season.

Once veteran opener Rohit Sharma retired hurt due to a hamstring issue in the sixth over, MI wilted under pressure against an accurate bowling attack. Krunal Pandya's canny left-arm spin stifled the MI batters.

Had it not been for Impact Player Sherfane Rutherford's unbeaten 31-ball 71, the margin of defeat - and the net run-rate damage as a result - would have been much higher.

Batters' day out: Salt got the innings off to a flier while skipper Patidar wasted no time and kept the momentum going. EMMANUAL YOGINI

While Rohit didn't return to bat, RCB talisman Kohli also remained off the field for the second half after hurting his ankle during batting.

While David finished with a towering six off Trent Boult over deep mid-wicket, Salt had begun in similar fashion against the Kiwi pacer. But Salt truly came into his element against the spin duo of Mitchell Santner and Mayank Markande.

Salt welcomed Santner in the fourth over with three clean hits over the fence followed by a four. Once the PowerPlay ended, Markande, the leg-spinner, was taken to the cleaners with three crisp fours and a big six.

Shardul Thakur broke the 120-run partnership in the 11th over, but captain Patidar arrived with purpose.

From the moment he tonked his first ball over mid-off for four, Patidar was precise and powerful, keeping the momentum going.

Jasprit Bumrah, despite going wicketless for the fourth consecutive game, applied the brakes as RCB had to settle for 53 runs in the last five overs.

The damage up front, however, was enough for RCB to return to winning ways while MI suffered its third straight loss.

SCOREBOARD

ROYAL CHALLENGERS
Phil Salt c Hardik b Shardul 78 *(36b, 6x4, 6x6)*, Virat Kohli c Suryakumar b Hardik 50 *(38b, 5x4, 1x6)*, Rajat Patidar c Tilak b Santner 53 *(20b, 4x4, 5x6)*, Tim David (not out) 34 *(16b, 2x4, 3x6)*, Jitesh Sharma lbw b Boult 10 *(9b, 1x4)*, Romario Shepherd (not out) 2 *(2b)*; Extras (lb-1, nb-1, w-11): 13; Total (for four wkts. in 20 overs): 240.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-120 (Salt, 10.5 overs), 2-185 (Kohli, 14.4), 3-194 (Patidar, 15.6), 4-231 (Jitesh, 19.2).

MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING
Boult 4-0-50-1, Hardik 4-0-39-1, Bumrah 4-0-35-0, Santner 4-0-43-1, Markande 2-0-40-0, Shardul 2-0-32-1.

MUMBAI INDIANS
Ryan Rickelton c Bhuvneshwar b Suyash 37 *(22b, 3x4, 3x6)*, Rohit Sharma retd. hurt 19 *(13b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Suryakumar Yadav c Rasikh b Krunal 33 *(22b, 5x4)*, Tilak Varma c Duffy b Suyash 1 *(3b)*, Hardik Pandya c Shepherd b Duffy 40 *(22b, 6x4, 1x6)*, Sherfane Rutherford **(Impact Player for Markande)** (not out) 71 *(31b, 1x4, 9x6)*, Naman Dhir c Patidar b Rasikh 1 *(2b)*, Mitchell Santner (not out) 8 *(6b, 1x4)*; Extras (lb-2, nb-1, w-9): 12; Total (for five wkts. in 20 overs): 222.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-72 (Rickelton, 7.1), 2-74 (Tilak, 7.5), 3-121 (Suryakumar, 12.2), 4-145 (Hardik, 14.4), 5-154 (Naman, 15.3).

RCB BOWLING
Duffy 4-0-58-1, Bhuvneshwar 4-0-38-0, Rasikh **(Impact Player for David)** 2.5-0-23-1, Krunal 4-0-26-1, Suyash 4-0-47-2, Shepherd 1.1-0-28-0.

Toss: Mumbai Indians.
Player-of-the-Match: Salt.
RCB won by 18 runs.

Next assignment

RCB: April 15 vs. LSG Bengaluru, 7.30 p.m.

MI: April 16 vs. PBKS Mumbai, 7.30 p.m.

Crucial cameo: David smashed three sixes and a couple of fours in his unbeaten 16-ball 34. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Prasidh, Gill-Buttler star as Titans lord over Super Giants

M.R. Praveen Chandran
LUCKNOW

Lucknow Super Giants' struggles at home continued as it suffered its sixth consecutive IPL loss at the Ekana Stadium after a rampant Gujarat Titans registered a seven-wicket win on Sunday.

A below-par 165-run target was chased down with ease, thanks to skipper Shubman Gill's elegant 56 and Jos Buttler's aggressive 60. Gill and Buttler, who notched up his 100th T20 half-century, added 84 for the second wicket to put Titans on course.

The manner in which GT constructed its chase was in contrast to the nurdling pace at which the LSG innings moved after the PowerPlay.

B. Sai Sudharsan teed off with two boundaries off Mohammed Shami and Gill clubbed the 35-year-old for three fours and a six in a 20-run over.

But leg-spinner Digvesh Rathi sent back Sai Sudharsan against the run of play, but it only brought Super Giants more trouble in the form of Buttler.

Left-arm spinner George Linde couldn't make an impact on his IPL debut and was smashed for boundaries by both Gill and Buttler. Though the two were dismissed in quick succession, Washington Sundar and Rahul Tewatia ensured there were no more hiccups.

Top-notch: Prasidh displayed his wares during a match-winning four-wicket haul. R.V. MOORTHY

Earlier, Titans' crafty bowling, led by Prasidh Krishna (four for 28), meant that the Super Giants innings never took off despite a brisk start on a slow surface.

Sixty runs came in the PowerPlay, 60 in the 7-17 over period and 44 off the final three.

There were cameos at the top and in the lower middle-order but none of the batters could convert them into big scores. The total of 164 for eight looked far from threatening.

Super Giants lost momentum from a promising 69 for two as wickets fell at regular intervals during the middle overs.

Prasidh took the pace off the ball and had Aiden Markram and Nicholas Pooran as his victims while leggie Rashid Khan choked the flow of runs.

But Mukul Choudhary, Impact Player Linde and Shami made useful runs as LSG pushed for a final flourish. However, once Gill and Buttler took charge, the Rishabh Pant-led side was never in with a chance.

SCOREBOARD

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS
Aiden Markram c Washington b Prasidh 30 *(21b, 5x4, 1x6)*, Mitchell Marsh c Gill b Rabada 11 *(4b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Rishabh Pant c Tewatia b Siraj 18 *(11b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Ayush Badoni c Phillips b Prasidh 9 *(11b, 1x4)*, Nicholas Pooran c Gill b Prasidh 19 *(21b, 2x6)*, Abdul Samad c Phillips b Ashok 18 *(22b, 2x4)*, Mukul Choudhary c Buttler b Prasidh 18 *(14b, 1x4, 1x6)*, George Linde **(Impact Player for Badoni)** c Shahrukh **(Impact Player for Siraj)** b Ashok 16 *(10b, 3x4)*, Mohammed Shami (not out) 12 *(5b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Avesh Khan (not out) 4 *(1b, 1x4)*; Extras (b-1, lb-5, w-3): 9; Total (for eight wkts. in 20 overs): 164.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-14 (Marsh, 1.3 overs), 2-45 (Pant, 4.1), 3-69 (Markram, 6.6), 4-74 (Badoni, 8.2), 5-109 (Pooran, 14.3), 6-118 (Samad, 16.2), 7-131 (Mukul, 18.1), 8-157 (Linde, 19.4).

TITANS BOWLING
Siraj 4-0-19-1, Rabada 4-0-54-1, Ashok 4-0-32-2, Prasidh 4-0-28-4, Rashid 4-0-25-0.

GUJARAT TITANS
B. Sai Sudharsan c Avesh b Digvesh 15 *(14b, 3x4)*, Shubman Gill c Pant b Prince 56 *(40b, 6x4, 1x6)*, Jos Buttler c Markram b Shami 60 *(37b, 11x4)*, Washington Sundar (not out) 21 *(13b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Rahul Tewatia (not out) 10 *(8b, 1x4)*; Extras (w-3): 3; Total (for three wkts. in 18.4 overs): 165.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-45 (Sai Sudharsan, 5.1), 2-129 (Gill, 14.5), 3-135 (Buttler, 15.4).

SUPER GIANTS BOWLING
Shami 4-0-36-1, Prince 4-0-31-1, Digvesh 4-0-31-1, Linde 3-0-28-0, Avesh 2-0-24-0, Markram 1.4-0-15-0.

Toss: Titans; **PoM:** Prasidh.
Titans won by seven wickets with eight deliveries remaining.

Next assignment

LSG: April 15 vs. RCB Bengaluru, 7.30 p.m.

GT: April 17 vs. KKR Ahmedabad, 7.30 p.m.

Taking the pace off worked: Prasidh

M.R. Praveen Chandran
LUCKNOW

Prasidh Krishna has left his mark on Gujarat Titans' wins this IPL season.

After defending 12 runs in the final over against Delhi Capitals, Prasidh came up with a career-best performance (four for 28) to wreck Lucknow Super Giants' innings at the Ekana Stadium on Sunday.

A delighted Prasidh said he tried to bowl differently from other pacers.

"It was important for us to maintain the winning streak and we did it. I was trying to bowl a mixture of hard lengths, bouncers and off-cutters.

"The other fast bowlers were trying to bowl with pace on while I felt I could take the pace off. It worked for me. The pitch was quite challenging for both bowlers and batters.

"They (LSG) played quite a few good shots when we erred in our line and length.

"So it was important to bowl in the right areas," said the right-arm speedster.

On the trend of bowlers increasingly using short balls in the IPL, Prasidh said it was important to keep the batters guessing.

"The batters are ready for the yorkers and it is important to confuse them. So most of us bowl short balls and slow bouncers."

Points table

	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
Rajasthan Royals	4	4	0	0	8	2.055
Punjab Kings	4	3	0	1	7	0.720
Royal Challengers	4	3	1	0	6	1.148
Delhi Capitals	4	2	2	0	4	0.322
Gujarat Titans	4	2	2	0	4	-0.029
Lucknow Super Giants	4	2	2	0	4	-0.427
Sunrisers Hyderabad	4	1	3	0	2	-0.024
Mumbai Indians	4	1	3	0	2	-0.772
Chennai Super Kings	4	1	3	0	2	-1.532
Kolkata Knight Riders	4	0	3	1	1	-1.315

SRH seeks improved bowling display

While the opening pairs Travishek and JaiSurya are capable of cutting loose in the PowerPlay, the middle-overs could well decide the contest

IPL-19

Anirudh Velamuri
HYDERABAD

Two of the IPL's most devastating opening duos are set to clash as a Sunrisers Hyderabad side blowing hot and cold hosts unbeaten Rajasthan Royals at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium on Monday.

Explosive duo

Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma, arguably the most explosive opening pair in T20 cricket over the past two years, once again set the tone against Punjab Kings on Friday, plundering 105 runs in the PowerPlay and briefly threatening the elusive 300-run mark.

However, the pair falling in a single over and a struggling middle-order helped PBKS restrict the marauders in orange to a now modest 219.

With Pat Cummins-less SRH pace unit went wicketless against the Kings while conceding 145 runs in 10 overs.

In contrast, the relatively inexperienced spin attack fared better with four wickets while giving away 78 runs in 8.5 overs.

Rajasthan Royals has seen SRH's Travishek and raise their own opening firebomb: JaiSurya (Yashasvi Jaiswal and Vaibhav Suryavanshi), an unintentional homage to a Lankan batting maverick by the same name.

The 383 runs between them have come at the cost of several proud bowling orders whimpering away.

Three of the season's top four run-scorers don pink and blue - the other being Dhruv Jurel.

The Royals had a forgettable 2025 with the ball, finishing with the fewest wickets (65), the worst average (42.15), and the second-highest economy rate.

This season has been good so far, with the side at the top of the pile with 35 wickets in just four games.

A resurgent Ravi Bishnoi (nine scalps in 11 games, second in the Purple Cap standings) leads the charge.

Balanced attack

Jofra Archer and Nandre Burger with the new ball and Sandeep Sharma, Tushar Deshpande, and Ravindra Jadeja thereafter add valuable depth and discipline.

Contrasts headline this encounter. One side feeds on chaos, the other on control - and neither will want to blink first.

Today's match

SRH vs RR

Hyderabad, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 21

SRH 12 | RR 9

PREVIOUS MEETING

SRH won by 44 runs, 2025

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JIOHOTSTAR

Causing a flutter: Suryavanshi, who has lit up the IPL , would be eyeing another good outing. NAGARA GOPAL

Mental strength secret of Suryavanshi's success: Deshpande

Anirudh Velamuri
HYDERABAD

To call Vaibhav Suryavanshi the talk of the T20 circuit is quite an understatement. After showing flashes of promise last IPL, he has taken a giant leap forward this season, and the numbers reflect it emphatically.

Having scored 252 runs in seven innings in IPL 2025, he has taken just four games to reach 200 runs in this edition. His Rajasthan Royals teammate Tushar Deshpande believes the secret to his success lies in his mental strength.

"He plays the ball, not the bowler. He is quite mature for his age, which is extraordinary and something I have not seen in my cricketing career. A 15-year-old boy smashing world-class bowlers! He always has an upper hand on (the) bowlers."

Ahead of the clash against Sunrisers Hyderabad, Deshpande steered clear of comparisons between the opening pairs of both sides.

"The strengths and weaknesses are completely different. I can't bowl to Vaibhav in training as preparation to counter Travis Head.

"All four (Suryavanshi, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Head and Abhishek Sharma) are quite explosive but are different in the way they approach the game or score runs," he said.

The week ahead

April 13	SRH vs. RR	Hyderabad	7.30 p.m.
April 14	CSK vs. KKR	Chennai	7.30 p.m.
April 15	RCB vs. LSG	Bengaluru	7.30 p.m.
April 16	MI vs. PBKS	Mumbai	7.30 p.m.
April 17	GT vs. KKR	Ahmedabad	7.30 p.m.
April 18	RCB vs. DC	Bengaluru	3.30 p.m.
April 18	SRH vs. CSK	Hyderabad	7.30 p.m.
April 19	KKR vs. RR	Kolkata	3.30 p.m.
April 19	PBKS vs. LSG	New Chandigarh	7.30 p.m.

Tough luck: Ayush suffered a straight-game loss. BWF

Ayush falls at the final hurdle

BADMINTON

Press Trust of India
NINGBO (CHINA)

India's Ayush Shetty signed off with a silver medal after his giant-killing run ended in a straight-game loss to world No. 2 Shi Yu Qi in the final of the Badminton Asia Championships here on Sunday.

The 20-year-old from Mangaluru struggled to find his rhythm, going down 8-21, 10-21 to the reigning world champion from China, as India's 61-year wait for a men's singles gold at the event continued.

Despite the loss, it was a creditable campaign from the unseeded youngster, who became only the second Indian men's singles player after Dinesh Khanna to reach the final of the continental showpiece.

Dinesh remains the only Indian singles champion at the event, having won the title in 1965. Since then, only the men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have lifted the trophy, triumphing in 2023.

City turns on the magic in second half blitz to blow away Chelsea

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

Manchester City ignited the Premier League title race with a second-half blitz that sealed a 3-0 win against Chelsea as it closed the gap on leader Arsenal on Sunday.

Pep Guardiola's side produced a devastating spell immediately after half-time, with Nico O'Reilly and Marc Guehi scoring in the space of six minutes at Stamford Bridge.

Jeremy Doku wrapped up a statement victory to ensure City took advantage of Arsenal's shock 2-1 home defeat against Bournemouth on Saturday.

Second-placed City is now only six points behind Arsenal with a game in hand, setting up a seismic showdown against the Gunners at the Etihad Stadium on April 19.

Napoli's Serie A title defence suffered a blow with Sunday's 1-1 draw at Parma. Scott McTominay's drilled finish on the hour mark gave Napoli a draw which may not be enough for the champion to claim a third Scudetto in four seasons.

Earlier on Saturday, AC Milan relinquished any remaining hope of winning the title after falling to a shock 3-0 home defeat by Udinese.

No sweat: Guehi caps off a smart turn with a composed finish for City's second against Chelsea. REUTERS

The results: Premier League: Crystal Palace 2 (Mateta 80, 90+4-pen) bt Newcastle 1 (Osula 43); Nottingham Forest 1 (Williams 38) drew with Aston Villa 1 (Murillo 23-og); Sunderland 1 (Mukiele 61) bt Tottenham 0; Chelsea 0 lost to Manchester City 3 (O'Reilly 51, Guehi 57, Doku 68). **Serie A:** Genoa 2 (Malinovskyi 18, Ekuban 84) bt Sassuolo 1 (Kone 57); Parma 1 (Strefezza 1) drew with Napoli 1 (McTominay 60). **Bundesliga:** Stuttgart 4 (Stiller 22, Fuehrich 32, Mittelstaedt 56, El Khannouss 86) bt Hamburg 0. **On Saturday: LaLiga:** Sevilla 2 (Adams 10-pen, Gudelj 45+2) bt Atletico Madrid 1 (Bonar 35). **Serie A:** Atalanta 0 lost to Juventus 1 (Boga 48); AC Milan 0 lost to Udinese 3 (Bartesaghi 27-og, Ekkelenkamp 37, Atta 71).

Determined Bagan overcomes Punjab's challenge in thriller

ISL

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

Mohun Bagan Super Giant produced a spectacular late comeback to defeat Punjab FC 3-2, thanks to an added-time winner, in an exciting ISL-12 fixture here on Sunday.

Punjab struck first in the 12th minute through Daniel Ramirez, who calmly finished from close range after receiving a cross from Mohammad Uvais. Bagan responded strongly and found the equaliser in the 29th as Jamie Maclaren capitalised on a clever assist from Robson Robinho.

In the second half, even as the contest reach a higher tempo, Punjab regained the lead at the hour-mark through Nigerian forward Nsungusi Effiong, who volleyed home a precise delivery from compatriot Bede Osuji. Bagan looked in trouble as the clock ticked past the 70-minute mark, but head coach Sergio Lobera made crucial changes to the attack.

Substitute Sahal Abdul Samad brought the Kolkata giant back into contention with a superb long-range strike and restored parity in the 73rd minute. The equaliser swung the momentum in Bagan's favour and the host snatched victory in stoppage time when another substitute, Jason Cummings, netted the decisive goal.

The win took Bagan to the second spot with 17 points in eight matches, behind Mumbai City FC (18 points), and kept it firmly in the title race.

The results: At Salt Lake Stadium: Mohun Bagan SG 3 (Jamie Maclaren 29, Sahal Abdul Samad 73, Jason Cummings 90+1) bt Punjab FC 2 (Daniel Ramirez 12, Nsungusi Effiong 60). **At Kishore Bharati Stadium:** Inter Kashi 1 (Mohammed Asif 15) bt Mohammedan Sporting 0.

Sinner... No. 1 again. AFP

Sinner wins Monte Carlo Masters title

Agence France-Presse
MONTE CARLO

Jannik Sinner beat Carlos Alcaraz in straight sets to win the Monte Carlo Masters for the first time on Sunday and reclaim the World No.1 ranking from his Spanish rival.

Sinner downed Alcaraz 7-6(5), 6-3 to capture his third ATP 1000 title of the year after completing the "Sunshine Double" last month with victories in Indian Wells and Miami.

He joins Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal as only the third player to win four successive ATP 1000 titles.

Zhu beats Vaishali, catches up with the Indian at the top

CANDIDATES CHESS

Sports Bureau

In what was one of the most important games in the Women's Candidates chess tournament, Zhu Jiner defeated sole leader R. Vaishali with black pieces in the 12th round at Pegeia, Cyprus, on Sunday. With the win, Zhu has caught up with her Indian rival at the top of the table.

They both have seven points each, going into the final rest day on Monday. Half-a-point behind them are Bibisara Assaubayeva and Anna Muzychuk, with two rounds remaining.

It was indeed a big setback for Vaishali who had begun the day with a full-point lead over Zhu and Muzychuk.

It was not going to be easy for her against the top-seeded Chinese, who has been the fastest rising star in women's chess of late.

Once Vaishali erred with her knight on the 36th move, Zhu took control. Three moves later, the Chennai Grandmaster resigned.

In the open section, Javokhir Sindarov retained his two-point lead after playing out a quick draw with Hikaru Nakamura. He has nine points, two more than second-placed Anish Giri, who missed winning chances against Wei Yi.

Key win: Zhu capitalised on Vaishali's error to hand the Indian her second loss. FIDE

The results (12th round): Andrey Esipenko (Rus) 4.5 drew with R. Praggnanandhaa 5; Matthias Bluebaum (Ger) 5.5 drew with Fabiano Caruana (USA) 6; Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb) 9 drew with Hikaru Nakamura (USA) 5.5; Wei Yi (Chn) 5.5 drew with Anish Giri (Ned) 7.

Women: Anna Muzychuk (Ukr) 6.5 drew with Aleksandra Goryachkina (Rus) 5.5.

R. Vaishali 7 lost to Zhu Jiner (Chn) 7; Divya Deshmukh 5 lost to Tan Zhongyi (Chn) 5; Bibisara Assaubayeva (Kaz) 6.5 bt Kateryna Lagno (Rus) 5.5.

McIlroy's big lead goes up in smoke, shares the top spot with a surging Young

GOLF

Agence France-Presse
AUGUSTA

Rory McIlroy charged back late after squandering a six-stroke edge to share the lead with Cameron Young after a wild third round at the Masters on Saturday.

A chaotic afternoon at Augusta National saw both men plunk key shots into water on the back nine but finish level atop the leaderboard on 11-under 205 through 54 holes, one stroke ahead of American Sam Burns.

McIlroy, who started the day with a record six-shot lead, carded a one-over 73 while Young roared into contention with a scintillating seven-under 65.

McIlroy birdied the 14th and 15th holes to regain the lead but found the trees off the 17th tee on the way to a bogey and his one-over round. Third-ranked Young got off to a scorching start with birdies on five of the first 10 holes.

He birdied 13 and 14, his drive at the 13th hitting a tree and landing fortuitously in the fairway, then overcame a watery bogey at 15 by curling in a 27-foot birdie putt at the par-three 16th.

Burns carded a 68 and was one stroke in front of Ireland's Shane Lowry.

Lowry aced the 190-yard par-three sixth hole on his way to a 68 that left him fourth on 207, one stroke ahead of Australian Jason Day and England's Justin Rose. Lowry became the first Masters player with multiple holes-in-one, having aced the 16th in the final round in 2016.

World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler fired a bogey-free 65 – his lowest career Masters round – to stand four off the lead on 209 alongside China's Li Haotong, who also found water on his way to shooting 69.

McIlroy made a double bogey at the 11th when his approach sailed left into a pond and after a bogey at par-three 12th, his lead had vanished in Amen Corner.

McIlroy responded with a 19-foot birdie putt at the 14th and drove the green in two at the par-five 15th to set up a tap-in birdie only for a bogey at 17 to drop him back.

Rose went from seven adrift to three back and hopes for a final round like last year when he made 10 birdies.

Dazzling: Young got off to a scorching start with birdies on five of the first 10 holes. GETTY IMAGES

Top scores (third round): **205:** Young 73-67-65, McIlroy 67-65-73. **206:** Burns 67-71-68. **207:** Lowry 70-69-68. **208:** Day 69-71-68, Rose 70-69-69. **209:** Haotong 71-69-69, Scheffler 70-74-65. **210:** Henley 73-71-66, Reed 69-69-72, Cantlay 77-67-66. **211:** Knapp 73-69-69, Morikawa 74-69-68, Griffin 72-69-70.

Consistency matters

Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This column may help

OFF THE EDGE
Nandini Raman

I am a first-year Law student preparing for the UPSC. I am clueless about the study material. How do I crack the exam?
K. Elamaran,

Dear Elamaran,

THE UPSC CSE exam has three stages: Prelims, Mains and Interview. The Prelims have two papers. General Studies I focuses on History, Polity, Geography, Economy, Environment, Science and Tech, and Current Affairs. The General Studies II, also called CSAT, is a test of comprehension, logical reasoning, basic numeracy and general problem solving. Both papers are MCQ types.

The Mains have nine written papers of which the two language papers are qualifying ones. The others are an essay, four General Studies papers, and two papers on an optional subject.

Finally comes the interview, which assesses your personality, clarity of thought and understanding of current affairs.

Start with the NCERT History, Geography, Economics and Science (Classes 6-12) textbooks for the Prelims. Read newspapers every day to stay updated with current affairs. Look up books such as *Indian Polity* by M. Laxmikanth or *Indian Economy* by Ramesh Singh. For the CSAT, practise past papers to work on the skills required. If you choose Law as your optional subject for the Mains, your coursework will overlap with core topics such as constitution, governance, and judiciary, international relations or public administration.

Start small, focus on consistent work on a daily and weekly plan. Practise essay writing, answering MCQs, revise current affairs, and make short notes for revision.

My son is in Class 12 (Accountancy with Computer Science). He wants a career in software development, data science, or systems analysis. How can he do this with his current non-Science stream in Class 12? Is there some way to bridge the gap?
Naveen

Dear Naveen,

While a non-Maths Class 12 background does not permanently block a career in software, data science, or systems analysis, it is a challenge in our given academic system.

Most B. Tech programmes Maths require Maths in Class 12. He can consider BCA with a focus on Programming, database management, web development, and software engineering.

Colleges to consider are Christ University, Bengaluru; Loyola College, Chennai; and Amity University, Noida. Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) offers B.Tech with bridge courses. Some private universities have foundation semesters in Maths and programming.

Look for five-year Integrated programmes (B.Sc + M.Sc / BCA + MBA / B.Tech + Data Science) that may allow non-Maths students if they complete foundation courses in Maths.

Online courses and certifications on NPTEL (Discrete Mathematics, Probability and Statistics), Khan Academy (Pre-Algebra, Algebra, Probability and Statistics), Coursera/ edX (Foundations for Data Science, Python and Maths, Programming and Logic, Python, C, or C++) can help bridge the gap. He can also practise algorithmic thinking via CodeChef, HackerRank, or LeetCode.

I cleared my CA Foundation and have been a sales consultant, a tutor at a coaching centre, a clerk in a bank, and an academic counsellor in an edtech company. Now I am preparing for NET-JRF, but have fallen out of the habit of studying. How can I improve my concentration?
Samiksha

Dear Samiksha,

Why do you want a NET-JRF career? Are you opting for teaching and research because of job security, or job satisfaction? Create a vision board of what you want for yourself and keep it on your study table. Awareness is the first step to rebuilding focus. Work on resetting your study mindset.

Start small and build momentu. Use structured study techniques and focus on single tasks. Avoid multi-tasking while studying (no phone, social media scrolling or doing anything else). Get enough sleep and a nutritious diet, exercise and some form of self-care.

Track your progress visually on a wall calendar to motivate yourself. Have a friend or an online study group so that you are held accountable for your progress. Give yourself small rewards for completing a session well and look after your mental health.

I finished Class 12 last year and took a gap year to prepare for the NEET. But now I want to move to Finance. I didn't have Commerce as a subject in school. How do I make the move?
Sarthak

You can move into finance without a Commerce background. Many professionals come from Science, Arts, or Engineering, and your background can actually be an advantage, especially for analytics, logical reasoning, and quantitative work.

You can explore areas like Corporate Finance, Banking, Investments, Financial Planning, Risk Management, Financial Modelling, or Fintech. To get started, build a foundation in accounting (balance sheets, P&L, cash flow), financial management (time value of money, ratios), basic economics, and corporate finance concepts. Alongside this, develop skills in Excel and financial modelling.

Use online platforms like Coursera, Udemy, NPTEL, and Investopedia, along with beginner-friendly finance books and YouTube channels, to strengthen your basics. For formal pathways, consider a BBA or B.Com (as a second degree or via lateral entry), or short-term certifications like CFA Level 1, Diploma in Banking and Finance, or Financial Modelling courses.

At the same time, focus on practical exposure through internships, projects like stock analysis, and skills in analytics (Python/SQL), Excel, and communication. Banking exams like SBI PO or IBPS PO are also strong entry routes.

With the right skills and consistent effort, transitioning into finance is very achievable.

Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line Off the Edge

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INBRIEF

Barwal breaks 48-year-old marathon National record

Sawan Barwal on Sunday broke the 48-year-old marathon National record, the longest standing mark in Indian athletics, at the NN Marathon Rotterdam. Barwal clocked 2h 11m and 58s to finish 20th in the elite marathon race and erase the previous time of 2:12:00 which had stood since 1978 in Shivnath Singh's name.

Crippa and Demise claim Paris Marathon victories

Italy's Yemaneberhan Crippa won the Paris Marathon with a time of 2:05:19s, while Ethiopia's Shure Demise took the women's crown in a new course record time (2:18:34).

Indian women compound archers clinch gold medal

The Indian compound women's team won the gold medal at the Archery World Cup Stage-1 in Puebla, Mexico. In the final, India, comprising V. Jyothi Surekha, Pragati and Madhura Dhamangaonkar, defeated USA, consisting of Olivia Dean, Paige Pearce and Alexis Ruiz, 233-232. However, the Indian duo of Pragati and Ojas Deotale lost to USA's Alexis and Stephan Hansen 154-155 in the mixed team bronze medal contest. India finished with a lone gold medal.

Improvement needed: Uppal feels the Indian girls have to work on their mentality.
SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

We have a lot of potential: Uppal

The captain rues the missed chances in the Billie Jean King Cup that cost India a playoffs spot but remains optimistic about the future

TENNIS

Uthra Ganesan
NEW DELHI

India failed to make the cut for the Billie Jean King Cup Playoffs but captain Vishal Uppal insisted there was more hope than disappointment in the way the Indian girls performed through the week.

India finished third after defeating Korea in its final tie in the six-team competition and Uppal, while ruing the opportunities, was optimistic about the future of Indian women's tennis.

"It was a week of missed chances for us. Against Thailand, if we had pulled off that second singles, we would have beaten them in doubles. Even against Indonesia, we were in the mix. Going into the competition, I knew we had to beat Thailand and Korea to qualify. We played three hours of bad tennis on Day One which cost us else it would have been a different story," Uppal said after the tournament.

"(But) I think they have a lot of potential. They can play ball. I would love for them to just pick up the mentality a lot more. You can't beat up on yourself, come what may. It will depend on how they grow their mentality and how they improve their physicality, because that is what it takes to get to the top level," he added.

Rutuja looking at Asiad

With team events uncommon in professional tennis, the Indians will have another chance at the Asian Games later this year and Rutuja Bhosale – who won mixed doubles gold in 2023 –- admitted she was looking forward to it.

"As an athlete, for me, getting a medal in the last edition was unreal. The experience is something that will live with me forever. Not just the medal but the reaction of everyone back home. Where I come from, a really small village in Solapur, nobody knows what's actually happening in world tennis. The only competitions they know are Asian Games, Olympics. The emotional support I received when I came home, I would love to experience that again.

"These are the moments we try and work together for and hopefully try and come out with a medal. We (her and Ankita Raina) are playing the next three weeks together, planning a few tournaments before we get into Asian Games. It's always fun to play with someone you shared court with for so many years and I think it will really help us if we do end up playing together," Rutuja hoped.

Sarun wins men's long jump gold

ATHLETICS

Sports Bureau

National indoor champion Sarun Payasingh won the men's long jump gold with 7.46m at the fourth leg of the Indian Athletics Series in Ranchi on Sunday.

Among other notable performers, international Vithya Ramraj won the women's 400m hurdles gold and World championships finalist Sarvesh Kushare secured the men's high jump title.

The results (winners only):

Men: 100m: Aniket (Mah) 10.60; **200m:** Mahendra Santa (Odi) 21.96. **800m:** Mohd. Mahasin Awal (WB) 1:53.21. **5,000m:** Sandeep Pal (UP). **110m hurdles:** Krishik M. (Rel) 13.72. **400m hurdles:** Shakti Singh (Raj) 51.34. **Long jump:** Sarun Payasingh (Odi) 7.46m. **Javelin:** Uttam (Mah) 74.85m; **High jump:** Sarvesh Kushare (Mah) 2.19m. **Women: 100m:** Mousumi Roy (Odi) 11.83. **200m:** Mousumi Roy (Odi) 24.79. **5,000m:** Bharti (Har) 16: 55.42; **400m hurdles:** Vithya Ramraj (Rly) 57.02. **Long jump:** Ancy Sojan (Navy) 6.45m.

Gout Gout powers to 200m title

Agence France-Presse
SYDNEY

Teenage sprint sensation Gout Gout ran a blistering 19.67 seconds to win the 200m at the Australian championships on Sunday, faster than Usain Bolt at the same age. Fellow Australian Aidan Murphy also cracked the 20s mark, coming in second in 19.88 – the two quickest times of the year, with legal tailwind.

"This is what I've been waiting for," said Gout.

His time was faster at the same age than Bolt, who ran 19.93 in 2004.

Aman, Mukul settle for silver; Dinesh wins bronze

Sports Bureau

Paris Olympics bronze medallist Aman Sehrawat (61kg) and Mukul Dahiya (86kg) bagged silver medals, while Dinesh (125kg) claimed a bronze at the Asian wrestling championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on Sunday.

Aman was beaten 13-10 by North Korean youngster Kim Kwang Myong, while Mukul was pinned by Iranian Kamran Ghasempour in their respective finals.

Dinesh outplayed home favourite Arslanbek Turdubekov 12-1 in the bronze-medal contest. With two gold, three silver and two bronze medals, India finished second behind Iran in the freestyle event.

Aarit is youngest Indian IM norm-holder

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Aarit. FIDE

Delhi's 10-year-old Aarit Kapil became the youngest Indian chess player to make an International Master norm after he drew with Samuel Asaka of Australia in the final round of an international tournament at Menorca in Spain.

After a brilliant start that included a victory over former world under-20 champion and Grandmaster Nogerbek Kazybek of Kazakhstan in the second round, Aarit, who is just 10 years and seven months old, became the youngest Indian to hold an IM norm.

The Indian talent needed just a half point out of the last three games but two losses in a row almost looked like the dream of making the maiden norm was still miles away. However, in the last round, Aarit quickly gathered his thoughts and did the needful in quick time.

LIVE TELECAST

IPL: Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 7.30 p.m.
Serie A: DAZN, 12.15 a.m. (Tuesday)
LaLiga: FanCode, 12.30 a.m. (Tuesday)